

MARRIAGE IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT

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MARRIAGE BEFORE AND AFTER



# *Marriage Is What You Make It*

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PAUL POPENOE

## Preface

Most of the failures in marriage are unnecessary; they could be prevented by proper education before marriage. Even lacking such education, they can be prevented by a reasonable amount of effort, intelligently directed, after marriage.

Husbands and wives often fail because they do not try to succeed. They are not willing to give to marriage the same study and determination that they would give to a job in the business or industrial world. Others are willing and anxious to make a determined effort, but do not know how to apply this effort effectively.

This book is intended to give them some of the necessary know-how.

In preparing it I have drawn freely on my twenty years' experience at the American Institute of Family Relations, where we have not only prepared young people to succeed in marriage but have enabled many thousands of couples to succeed after they seemed to have failed. I have profited by collaboration with several score of colleagues, particularly Dr. Roswell H. Johnson, author of the *Johnson Temperament Analysis*, one of the most important tools of the modern marriage counselor. I have made use, in this book, of many of his suggestions for the improvement of specific traits of temperament.

The case histories which I have used to illustrate my points are, in effect, synthetic: I have combined elements from different cases, changing names, places, and all other clues to identification. They are representative of the facts, but anyone who imagines that he recognizes a real family history in these pages will merely be deceiving himself.

PAUL POPENOE



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MARRIAGE IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT





# 1

## *There Never Was a Marriage Like Yours*

ALICE has been married less than a year, but the quarrels have already been so numerous that she has lost count. "It's so different from what I expected," she sobs.

Martin is equally disturbed, and likewise resentful. "She seemed to change as soon as we were married," he explains with evident bewilderment. "Before the wedding it seemed as if we agreed on everything, but that all disappeared when we came back from the honeymoon. I have tried to be patient and to point out in detail to her just what needed to be done. Unfortunately, I must say that I've had very little cooperation. She hasn't given me at all the kind of a home that I wanted and that I feel I have a right to expect."

What's the matter with these two intelligent and fine young people? Largely that when they assured each other, "There was never in all the world a marriage like this one of ours," *they didn't believe it!*

It was true, however. If they had acted on that fact they would have saved themselves trouble. But instead of recognizing that they were playing a game which was new to the world and for which they had to make up new rules as they went along, each really tried to play an old childhood game. And each, without knowing it, was really trying to play *a different game*.

Each has for years dreamed of marriage and lived it out in imagination. Martin has pictured the delights and satisfactions which it would bring. He has seen himself the hero of a domestic

drama, and his fancy has elaborated lovingly the scenes which he would stage. He has a role already written and rehearsed by himself, and from the moment he said "I do," he began to play that role.

Since it was a husband-and-wife drama, he selected Alice to play the other part. But of course Alice had never learned the other part. She had learned a wifely role on her own account, and it was a very different role from that which Martin had allotted to her. It had to be different, because she had been reared differently and had worked with different materials.

How can any domestic drama be a smooth and finished performance when the hero and heroine are reading lines from different authors?

This ready-made pattern with which each of us begins marriage is put together largely from our early memories of our own homes. Those memories color our views forever. If you look back on your childhood as the happiest part of your life, you will naturally want to have a home of that kind, when you grow up and have a home of your own. If you resent your childhood, on the other hand, you will want to repudiate that pattern and do the opposite. In either case, you have a definite pathway marked out. You are determined to make your future home a good one. Now you have that new home, and you start from the altar to make it good. The job is easy, because you have the pattern already in mind. You know what a good home is. All you need now is a little co-operation.

Martin's mother was a well-meaning but weak woman, and his father ran things with a firm hand. As the only boy in a large family of girls, Martin was a particular object of paternal pride. Father kept mother in her place anyway, but particularly when his son and heir was involved. If mother tried to discipline him, Martin had only to run to father for defense. His father would lay down the law, and if mother tried to explain she got the lordly answer, "I don't care to discuss the matter any further," along with a look which silenced her for several hours.

That was good enough for Martin. That's the kind of a husband a man ought to be! A good husband—that's what he would be, too, when he grew up. And now, here he was.

Of course there were other elements that contributed to Martin's performance. He had absorbed ideas from books and newspapers, from the movies, from Uncle Ed, from his Boy Scout leader, from a hundred other sources. All his life, he had been unconsciously collecting fragments which fused together in his imagination and came out as the role which he would play in marriage.

Along with this role for himself, he had necessarily constructed an image of an ideal wife. He would not marry until he found his ideal.

Alice had not too much resemblance to his ideal, except that she was petite and blonde. But propinquity and romantic glamour covered up the differences. He picked her out, with her own assistance—she was cooperative enough in those days, he reflected!—to play Queen to his King.

Needless to say, Alice had always looked forward to becoming a Queen—but certainly not that kind of a Queen! She had not been brought up in that kind of a home. Her mother was no timid and fearful junior partner waiting for the Boss to issue his instructions. She was an efficient homemaker whose husband left the management of everything to her without inquiry while he busied himself, often at the distant state capitol, with politics. Alice had been so much with her mother that she knew perfectly well what a good wife was like, and there was not the slightest doubt in her mind that she could be a good wife as soon as she got the chance.

But now the chance had come, it did not seem to fit into her pattern. Worst of all, Martin did not act the way everybody knew a good husband ought to act. "Everything I do seems to displease him," she wept again. "I can't get him to talk things over reasonably. He wasn't at all like that before our marriage."

Of course he wasn't, because at that time he was not playing the role of a husband. He was playing the role of a lover. He had a set of patterns for that, too, but they were a better match for those of his bride-to-be, because both of them had derived their ideas from similar sources: the movies, popular songs, contemporary fiction. That role naturally went into the discard as he started the return journey up the church aisle. Now he was a husband, and he began to play the role for which he had been

molded all his life, but which he had never before had a chance to play except in imagination.

Alice was going through a parallel performance—parallel in the literal sense that the two were following lines which never met. Each had begun, therefore, even before the first round of entertainments in their new home was completed, to fear that in spite of their love they were really incompatible.

*Incompatible!* It would be hard to find a word that is so often used unscientifically. Almost any two people are compatible if they try to be and if they know what they are doing. Almost any two people are incompatible if they don't know what they are doing and if they don't try to be compatible.

Incompatible wasn't the word for Alice and Martin. They were just plain *ignorant*. Each had gone into the partnership expecting to fit the partner into a ready-made and extraordinarily complicated pattern. Each was simply too ignorant to know that this *can't be done*.

Each went into marriage with great expectations, but those expectations were tailored to fit someone else—someone, as a matter of fact, who never existed. What each needed was merely to start at the beginning, to recognize that there never was a marriage like this, and to rejoice in the fact. Why should either one of them want a sort of secondhand, ready-to-wear success in marriage? Of course it would be a poor fit, like other castoffs and hand-me-downs. Here was a brand-new marriage for them. It couldn't fit anyone else but it could fit them. What they needed was to wipe the slate as clean as possible and then to use a bit of creative imagination to draw some new patterns; to live from these new patterns a marriage different from anything ever before known and, for them, better than anything ever before known.

How would you go about this?

Suppose we take an easy and much oversimplified illustration just to make it definite. Alice and Martin are going to appear before the public in a play. Just before the curtain rises, Alice repeats her opening lines.

MARTIN: What on earth is all that?

ALICE: If you don't even know the beginning of *Romeo and*

*Juliet*, what kind of a performance do you think this will be?

MARTIN: I think this performance will be *Hamlet*, just as we always intended.

They look at each other, dumfounded. It transpires that he thought they were to play *Hamlet* and knows virtually nothing about Romeo; she understood that they were to play *Romeo and Juliet*, and has never even read *Hamlet*.

BOTH: This is terrible! What on earth will we do?

MARTIN: We'd better sneak out the back door and hit for home as fast as we can.

ALICE: It's too late for that; the audience is present. We'll have to make up some kind of a new show for them.

MARTIN: They'd think we were crazy.

ALICE: No, because they don't know what we were going to present. It was never announced.

MARTIN: You're right. They have no idea what they were going to see, anyhow. We'll give them the show of their lives.

ALICE: It will certainly be a lot more fun than warming up that old high school stuff. Just a real folksy show—you know, two young people very much in love with each other. Everyday life.

MARTIN: Yes, and no tragic stuff. This isn't a problem drama. It must "live happily ever after."

ALICE: Then don't drag in any of your old lines from *Hamlet*.

MARTIN: And you'll have to forget your big scenes from *Romeo and Juliet*. They're *out*. This is our show, not theirs.

ALICE: Yes, and it will certainly be such a show as no audience ever saw before. Go ahead—you lead.

So, if they had a little sense, each would discard the part that he had learned. If he dragged in any of that, it would lead to guesswork and confusion for his partner. Each would depend on his wits, taking his cue from the other and in turn trying to push the plot ahead so that the other would respond in like manner. The extent to which their show was interesting and enjoyable would depend not on the number of tags and apt quotations they could remember from the high school classics, but on how far each of them was original and resourceful enough to build on what the other offered.

In such a case, any pair with good will and enthusiasm could put on a show that the audience would enjoy because it was "real human nature." Shakespeare might have written it more smoothly, had he been given the job: but Shakespeare is dead. This is the performance of Alice and Martin; and if they are evidently having a good time, the audience won't complain. It will simply remark benignantly, "Of course, that isn't the kind of performance we used to give when I was a girl, but after all I suppose times have changed, and it really is nice to see the young people enjoying themselves so much, isn't it?"

When Martin feels, as he now professes to feel, that marriage has cheated him, what he really means is that his own imagination cheated him. He cheated himself.

When Alice avers that she was not prepared for what she found in marriage, she is simply confessing her own guilt. She should not have been prepared to *find* anything old and familiar, but to *create* something new and satisfying.

Of course, the more two people have in common, the longer they have known each other, the more likely they are to avoid misunderstandings. But most of the misunderstandings can be avoided, even under unfavorable conditions, if they are taken for granted and discounted ahead of time.

If you knew in advance that you were going to play opposite a girl who had never studied *Hamlet* but who had read some other play as yet unknown to you, you wouldn't waste much time on *Hamlet*. You would hope, moreover, that she wasn't wasting much time on something unknown to you. If your great object in life were to put on a good performance with this not impossible She, whom you had as yet not even met, and if you knew that your success in this future undertaking might be almost a matter of life and death to you, you would disregard the classics and center on three efforts:

1. You would learn as much as possible about drama in general, so that you would have all the resources of the wise at your command.
2. You would have in mind the main outlines (not details) of a good plot on which almost any two persons could collaborate without previous preparation, and you would be prepared, when

the time came, to enrich this bare plot as much as possible with the joint talents of yourself and your partner.

3. You would train yourself to be sensitive to the other person—to catch a cue readily and follow it up.

Fortunately, it is never too late to change your mind. The audience is complaisant. If you started on *Hamlet*, you can still let him die nobly—but hastily—and then go on with a sequel that will be a lot of fun. There will never be another performance like yours!

In the actual case, Alice and Martin had not figured this out in advance, so they were in trouble. It was Martin who came to me first.

"I don't like to think I'm a quitter, Dr. Popenoe," he declared, "but I wonder if there's any use in going on. We're not getting anywhere. We're farther apart each day."

"What are the principal points on which you differ?" I asked.

"Well, it's hard to say. It just seems as if everything is wrong."

"Now, Martin, that isn't plausible. *Everything* is a broad word! I'll bet that if I tried I could find at least one thing that isn't wrong. Is Alice extravagant? Is she slovenly? Is she hostile to your friends or business associates? Is she? . . ."

"No, she's all right on those things, Dr. Popenoe. Of course there really are lots of fine things about her."

"Well, then, we'd better try another tack. Suppose you take a little time to prepare the case. You come back next Monday and bring me a list of the ten worst things about her. Take plenty of time on this list; go over it every day; revise it again and again. We'll start with the ten worst things, and then work on down."

Martin appeared promptly on Monday.

"Where's the list?"

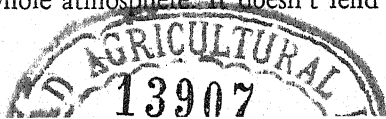
He squirmed. "Well, I didn't find it practicable to put the problem in the form of a list," he answered uneasily.

"Why not?"

He did not reply: he merely looked uncomfortable.

"*Everything* was wrong, but you couldn't think of ten different items?" I prompted him.

"Well, it's just the whole atmosphere. It doesn't lend itself to itemization."





"You're making it hard for me to help you, Martin. I need facts. I want what you lawyers call a bill of particulars. How many things did you finally get on the list before you tore it up?"

He was now really miserable: "Three or four."

"What were they?"

"Oh, they weren't anything. I found I couldn't analyze the problem as you expected me to. I guess that's why I came to you—I couldn't analyze the situation myself."

"Martin, you baffle me. I'm still trying to find out what the situation is. If Alice were here, do you think she could suggest any points on which you are wrong?"

"Sure—she'd have a lot of them. She'd say I was bossy."

"Well, are you?"

"Why, no, I never considered. . . ." He stopped, and I made no effort to break the long silence. At last he said, "Dr. Popenoe, when *everything* has seemed wrong, why was it I couldn't even think of as many as five actual complaints?"

"Maybe you could, but were ashamed to put them in writing."

This made him blush. "I'm afraid you've got me there," he replied. "Everything that came to my mind seemed so trivial—it couldn't really be the cause of our difficulties."

"Undoubtedly it wasn't," I encouraged him.

"It wasn't the things themselves—it was just my attitude toward them. I see that now."

"Too bossy?" I suggested on behalf of Alice.

"Well, yes, in a sense I suppose that's a fair indictment. I wouldn't call it bossy; but I just expected everything to be done my way."

"And Alice just expected everything to be done her way?"

"I suppose that was natural, wasn't it, Dr. Popenoe?"

"You've got the idea," I responded. "And just so you won't feel too much discouraged with yourself, I'll tell you that I have asked a great many people who thought *everything* was wrong with marriage to make a list of ten specific things. I don't believe any of them ever did so. When they try to do so, they can hardly help recognizing that the things which occur to them are the most trivial sort of trivialities. I'll give you an easier assignment, Martin.

Come back next Monday and bring me a list of the ten worst things you think Alice would complain about in *you*."

He went out grinning. Meanwhile I talked with Alice in much the same way, warning each of them not to discuss with the other anything that came to light in our conferences. I did not want them to compare notes too soon.

From the first interview, the atmosphere in their home began to change. Within a few weeks, they became less concerned to improve each other, but deeply concerned to improve their marriage. They put forth a conscious effort to make that marriage successful. It was successful.

### CAN YOU ACCEPT A NEW IDEA?

1. If you are entertaining the Duke and Duchess of Kent and your Aunt Hannah unexpectedly drops in, you are able to make her feel thoroughly at ease.
2. If your husband threatens to leave you, you seek help from an expert instead of from the neighbors.
3. If your younger sister points out that you are pronouncing "Przemysl" incorrectly, you are genuinely grateful to be set right.
4. If a dish called "uglies" is listed on the menu, you order it to find out what it is like.
5. If you have to give up a White House reception because your husband leaves town on a business trip, you limit your sulking to three minutes.
6. If the other side nominates for mayor the man you most admire, you are perfectly willing to scratch the ticket of your own party.
7. If you meet someone whose hobby is collecting safety pins, you are interested in learning all about it.
8. If you are buying clothes, you give as much thought to how

they will look on you next year as to their conformity with the current fashion.

9. If asked to help in the Community Chest campaign, you are willing to go out and canvass for funds.
10. If you get into an argument with your husband over furnishing the living room, you refrain from appealing to the example of your own father and mother.

If most of these statements apply to you, you probably have a good capacity for adjustment and are easily adaptable to new conditions. You should be able to work out new patterns for your own marriage with little difficulty.

## 2

### *Marriage Is Better Than Courtship*

THEY have just returned from their honeymoon, and friends are dropping in to see their new home. The whole atmosphere is rose-colored.

"We're not going to become a stodgy old 'hubby' and 'wifey' like you see in the funny papers," Charlotte assures everyone. "We talked it over in advance. So many marriages begin to drag after the honeymoon is over. There isn't going to be any letdown in ours. We've agreed that it is to be a lifelong courtship. Isn't it idiotic for people to stop trying to please each other just because they're married? They ought to try all the harder—and you bet we're going to do it!"

That's the right idea, and such determination will yield a big dividend if it is applied in the right way. But Charlotte and Hank need to know where they're coming out. If they really plan—as many romantic lovers do—to make a courtship last forever, you can safely bet they're not going to do it; and that they would be foolish to try.

Courtship (which is a good deal more than merely trying to please each other) is all right in its place, but marriage is better—and marriage is very different from courtship.

The purpose of courtship is to produce a marriage, not to be a marriage. Courtship is a campaign intended to culminate in one victory. Marriage is a lifelong victory. Trying to perpetuate all the activities of courtship in marriage may be as disastrous as dropping all of them after marriage.

No two courtships are alike, but they tend to be built on a

general pattern, in a series of steps. Take, in much simplified form, the process by which Hank won the adorable Charlotte. There were seven distinct steps in his courtship.

1. First he convinced himself that she was simply wonderful. This involved a certain amount of self-hypnotism. Of course she is a superior girl, but he built her up by isolating her in his mind and idealizing her. For that purpose he disregarded things which at another time would have irritated him—such, for example, as her older brother, who was unpleasantly patronizing.

2. At the same time, he was building *himself* up in *her* mind as a desirable person. He put his best foot forward: he kept himself in the picture. The notes, phone calls, gifts, invitations, were all means by which he remained in her consciousness pleasantly.

3. Then he began to convince *her* that *she* was simply wonderful. He made her feel pleased with herself when she was with him. There was a lot of innocent flattery, a lot of good times together, a feeling on her part that she was necessary to this fine young man—that she was actually a more important person than she had supposed. Her older sister had overshadowed her a bit until Hank came along. After that, Nancy and her work in the library were less interesting; Charlotte held the center of the stage. Of course she enjoyed it.

4. Next Hank began to make her feel that she would not only be happy with him, but safe with him. He piled up hints and evidences of his protection, strength, dependability. He offered her a vision of security in the future. All this, like her own reaction, was largely unconscious; but it is part of the way in which a man often woos and wins a woman.

5. Meanwhile, each of them was gradually breaking down the other's instinctive tendency to keep up a defensive barrier. Charlotte could not afford, at first, to admit even to herself how much all this meant to her. Much less could she afford to let anyone else, even her own sympathetic mother, know that the matter was serious. She had to convince herself that Hank was really in earnest—which meant, to a considerable degree, that she had to make him earnest.

In her freshman year at college she had been rushed by a smooth

upperclassman. She was foolish enough to let it go to her head, and when he dropped her flat—went to the Junior Prom with his own fiancée from back home whose existence he had not previously mentioned—she had been painfully deflated. There was still a little scar from it. After that she made up her mind that she would never let herself be trapped again. She would keep her feelings under strict control. If anything happened to this romance she could plausibly assure her friends, "I never allowed Hank to get serious. As far as I was concerned he was merely a good dancer. We had nothing else in common." So she kept her fingers crossed; she maintained mental reservations, which Hank had gradually to break down. This is often an important and time-consuming part of a courtship.

6. Meanwhile each had to deal with competition. Hank had to crowd two or three other fellows off the front porch. As he became more serious, Charlotte first weighed him carefully against these others. Then, when she began to believe that she wanted him to be still more serious, she kept him on his toes by going out deliberately with these other fellows. She could not afford to let him think she was too easy to win. He retaliated by showing up at the dances with flashy girls whom she did not know, and he thereby kept her worried. During a part of the process of courtship, there is a considerable amount of competition on both sides. In this case Hank and Charlotte played a game of hide-and-seek for some months before each was gradually convinced that it was not merely safe to be serious, but necessary to be serious!

7. Finally, there was the gradual ascent to the climax of their friendship and his proposal. This final climb to the summit involves, on each side, a narrowing of the field of vision, so to speak. Each shuts out extraneous and conflicting ideas. Hank closed his mind to the fact that he had thought of working several more years before he married. Charlotte closed her mind to the fact that she had told friends about a plan to go to Philadelphia and study music. Each focused on the other until neither could see anything except the other. At last, they agreed that "you're all the world to me!"

All these activities, with their accessories familiar to everyone,

may be a part of a normal process of courtship. They are well suited to the purpose of courtship. They produced the desired result in this instance.

But are they equally well suited to the purpose of marriage? Strictly speaking, their purpose had been served when Charlotte said "Yes." Obviously, not all of these things are going to be perpetuated successfully thirty or forty years longer in marriage, even by those who deliberately try to make courtship last forever. There must be some selection.

This whole process of selection is largely automatic and unconscious, but it has to be made nevertheless. The difficulty of making it is proportioned to the degree to which two persons have "gotten up in the air," under the influence of their own emotions and of the romantic patterns promoted by movies and by radio crooners.

Charlotte and Hank would have saved themselves trouble if they could have realized, at the outset, that there *is* a possibility of trouble from this source and that a change of patterns is necessary after marriage. But at first they were too much in love to think about it, then too busy to think about it, then too bewildered to think about it; within a year they were having some serious disagreements and bitter disappointments.

These came without warning; and when the quarrel was over they could never quite remember what started it. Charlotte, however, became more and more dissatisfied.

She came to me with her story, and it was a common enough story: the young wife, with too little to occupy her time, looking back longingly on the days before marriage, when Hank neglected his business shamefully in order to spend his time with her. He couldn't afford to do that any longer—in a new job, with a wife to support and Junior coming along pretty soon to increase the budget. Of course he was sometimes busy; of course he was sometimes preoccupied; of course he broke a date with her occasionally, for business reasons—which he had never done in the period of their courtship! Neither of them had taken the trouble to analyze their own problem and see how much of this old courtship they could reasonably expect to maintain. Yet the wedding was now a year in the past; they could look back on the premarital days a little more objectively, if they tried to do so.

Fortunately, Charlotte and Hank were both willing to try. Each of them declared that the agreement as to lifelong courtship was making trouble. Each of them admitted that they had made little effort to decide what courtship really means. Each of them conceded that it was reasonable to analyze the process of courtship with a view to appropriate action. What should they drop, what should they modify, what should they retain unchanged?

I helped them to isolate the seven elements described above, and to examine them. Separately, they worked out a decision on each one.

1. Hank is still convinced that she is simply wonderful. He will continue to cultivate that feeling. If he does not, he is stupid. Too often the disillusionment that comes after a romantic marriage is due to the failure of each one to use some psychological common sense.

Of course he now sees in her a lot of things that he previously did not know about, or that he previously ignored. Of course some of those things don't suit him. He had never realized how long it took her to get started in the morning. He had never imagined that it was so hard for her to make up her mind about buying clothes. He had never suspected that she had such an unreasoning fear of her Aunt Matilda.

Well, what of it? She certainly has a lot of good qualities, too. Those good qualities are still present. Indeed, if they have not actually been enhanced it is a reflection on him, because association with him for a year of marriage ought to have improved her!

This is the time for him (and her) to apply a little of the old doughnut-and-hole philosophy. He can deliberately concentrate on her many good points; or he can make himself miserable while he fusses, fumes, and nags about a few that don't suit him. Naturally, she isn't perfect. *Neither is he.*

On this point, Hank can well afford to continue the courtship habit of seeing the best in her.

2. Hank's need to build himself up in her eyes as a desirable and important person will be continuous throughout life; but now the "we-psychology" should do most of the work for him. He is important now as an integral part of her own existence. He should have been a little more thoughtful about an occasional tribute of flowers, books, candy, or lingerie; but Charlotte would show her-



self to be very childish if she exaggerated the significance of that and failed to balance against it the more durable values he is providing for her. On this second point, both need to be more realistic than they have been for some months.

3. Since Charlotte is an average wife, Hank will have to make a *continuous effort* to convince her that she is wonderful. His psychology in this was faulty. He supposed, in his masculine way, that when he asked her to marry him his proposal was proof enough that he thought she was wonderful. "This quotation will be in force until further notice!" Some of his friends who are successfully married could, and should, have emphasized to him how much the average wife needs perpetual reassurance on that point. Hank insisted that "actions speak louder than words," but he should know that the average wife (i.e., Charlotte) is unwilling to take them as a substitute. She wants both! So many women have doubts about themselves (a deep-seated inferiority complex, in reality) that this is one part of lifelong courtship in which Hank will be well advised to be persistent in well-doing.

4. The assurance of his strength and dependability has been much more conspicuous since marriage than before. He looks on this complacently. He has made good. This relationship also benefits from the "we-psychology": whatever he gains accrues to her. Charlotte is practical enough to admit this freely. She knows that Hank won't fail her in this. He is a man of character. Here is one element of courtship which has gained greatly in importance.

5. The old defensive barriers have not wholly disappeared, but they are gradually falling away. This does not mean that either one has surrendered individuality. On the contrary, the individuality of each one has been greatly augmented by the merger. Charlotte realizes that she can trust Hank, emotionally as well as financially; and Hank knows that he need not be afraid of Charlotte. As soon as the present little misunderstanding is straightened out, this problem will be solved completely. It is one element of courtship that can be wiped off the slate.

6. The more or less conscious attempt which each made, during some of the days of courtship, to create a feeling of competition and rivalry, is another activity which they will drop completely.

Some people find it hard to abandon this, and it becomes a childish and destructive habit. Of course Hank is pleased to know that other men admire his wife and, by inference, admire his judgment in selecting her and his attainment in winning her. But if Charlotte thought that coquetry would increase his love, she would be playing with fire.

One of her school chums, who learned part of the story and suspected the rest, advised her to "make him jealous." Elsie, being a divorcee, was hardly the one to advise Charlotte competently, but it's a widespread idea among women. "He won't appreciate you unless he finds he has competition." Men will occasionally put up with a good deal of that sort of thing, but I doubt if you could find any marriage improved by it which could not have been improved better by a more adult technique.

It is a fact that one of the great advantages of marriage is the emotional security it affords, purged of all rivalry and jealousy. Any rational person is glad enough to have this part of the courtship over and done with.

7. In place of a gradual ascent to the peak of emotion which brought about a decision to marry, they are now living on top of a mountain range, with many a valley between the peaks. There are plenty of ups and downs, but if they choose their course wisely they are not obliged to descend into the deeper canyons. They can keep on the ridges where the going is easier and the view is better. They now cover a great deal more territory in their journey; they have more adventures; and they see unlimited country ahead of them still to be explored.

Charlotte, in particular, needed a little education on this point. She had unconsciously thought of marriage as being a destination. The storybooks treat it that way. They give all their space to the long and thrilling journey by which you reach this destination. Once you arrive, the trip is really finished and only five words are required to complete the chronicle of the next fifty years: "They lived happily ever after."

On this phase of courtship she soon cleared her mind. She recognized that marriage is not a destination but a journey. Courtship is merely the conversation leading up to an agreement to take this long and incomparable journey together. With the

actual start of the journey this phase of courtship, too, is gone forever. Something vastly better has taken its place.

Examining thus the elements which had made up their idyllic courtship, Hank and Charlotte saw that there was none which they could allow to remain unchanged. Some were finished, others transformed. As they go on from year to year they will often say to each other, "How much better this is than mere courtship!"

### HAVE YOU GRADUATED FROM COURTSHIP?

1. You are sure that it takes a lot more than love to make a marriage successful.
2. You know that there would be something the matter with your marriage if your husband wanted to "take you somewhere" all the time.
3. When friends drop in unexpectedly, you do not call their attention to the fact that you have not yet done the breakfast dishes.
4. You resist, gently but firmly, all attempts of relatives (his or yours) to tell you how to decorate the living room.
5. You occasionally surprise your husband by insisting that you prefer to go to a thirty-cent movie rather than to a three-dollar night club.
6. When you are out with a large party of friends and get only four dances with your husband during the entire evening, you do not tearfully reproach him afterward with "You never would have done that before we were married."
7. You tell your husband—and really mean it—that you are glad to cancel a date with him so he can accept an invitation from his boss to a club smoker.
8. You meet your husband's old sweethearts without showing any signs of jealousy—or any signs of exultation.
9. When you discover that your husband has *always* read the morning paper at the breakfast table, you do not regard his

doing so now as evidence that the marriage is going to pieces.

10. You take it for granted that your husband will occasionally take you for granted.

No bride is really expected to attain this standard of perfection, but those who fall far short should begin to make some inquiries of themselves. It may be that they do not yet really know that they are married!

### 3

## *Make Your Marriage a Partnership*

MARRIAGE in the United States is generally supposed to be a democratic copartnership—a fifty-fifty relationship in which each spouse has equal rights, privileges, duties, responsibilities, and obligations.

- Actually, not much more than one third of the marriages, even in an educated group and after five years of experience, attain this fifty-fifty status.

I studied some thousands of marriages from this point of view, having the dominance rated by close friends and relatives. I don't believe they are often fooled. They decided that 28 per cent of the marriages were dominated by the wife, 35 per cent by the husband, while 37 per cent were genuine partnerships on a fifty-fifty basis.

- When they also rated the happiness of these marriages, they brought to light a marked difference. Of marriages in which the wife was boss, 47 per cent were happy. Of marriages dominated by the husband, 61 per cent were happy. When there was a real partnership, a marriage with two heads, 87 per cent were happy.

Since every marriage is supposed to be a partnership and since a partnership has such great advantages, why is it that not much more than one third of these marriages became partnerships, even among educated people and after five years of adjustment? If one recalls how many obstacles there are in the way, perhaps it is surprising that even one marriage in every three attains something like a fifty-fifty proportion. Think over some of the married persons you know, from this point of view:

1. There is Berton, who was brought up in a competitive world.

There was never any cooperation in his life. His father was a hard and ruthless businessman who trained his only son to follow in his footsteps. At the age of 18, Berton was already out as a salesman, trying to crush his rivals. When he married some years later, he knew nothing in the world except competition. Everybody he met would get the best of him if they could; it was up to him to get ahead of them. His courtship was on a highly competitive basis. Is it surprising that his marriage is on a highly competitive basis, too? It is not merely a question of "keeping up with the Joneses"; competition is so much a part of him that his wife, his mother-in-law, his own children, appear to him to be competitors. Never mind; he knows how to "look out for number one"!

Yet he is only an extreme illustration of a difficulty which confronts the whole population; for every one of us grows up in a world whose patterns are much more patterns of competition and conflict than they are of cooperation. Naturally, we find it hard to transform our attitudes when we marry.

2. There is Brenda, who grew up not merely in a world of general competition, but of special competition and conflict *between the sexes*. In elementary school she was always competing with boys for marks, for the teacher's favor, for election to class offices. In high school she was told that she was preparing to go out and make a living, but she was continually warned that she would have to fight men for the right to do so and that they would block her in every way possible. It's a Man's World, her teachers assured her; and several of them were women and viewed it very bitterly for that reason. Finally she graduated and took a job in which she was continually in competition with men. All her life she had looked on the male sex as a rival, a competitor, of the female sex. Is it surprising that she found it hard to cooperate wholeheartedly with her own husband, who belongs to a sex that she unconsciously thinks of as her natural enemy? In everything that Joe suggests, Brenda is inclined to look for a joker, to feel that he is probably "putting something over." Men are like that!

3. There is Hugh, who grew up with the opposite idea—that it's a Woman's World, in which the mere male never has a chance. His father was a busy man who had little time for family responsibilities on weekdays and none at all on Sundays, when golf claimed him.

Hugh was brought up under the domination of a long series of women—first his mother, then his Sunday School teacher, his kindergarten teacher, his music teacher, his dancing teacher, his first-grade teacher, and so on up the line. No men around: just one woman after another telling him what to do and when to do it. Even the girls in his class bossed him, because they were more mature than he biologically, emotionally, and socially. Like many another city boy, he grew up with an unconscious resentment against the whole female sex—a poor start for cooperation with any woman later in life. He married a woman who was perfectly willing to let him be the boss, but that is not enough for him: he is continually punishing her for the sins of his mother, his Sunday School teacher, and all the others who bossed him in the days when he could not fight back.

4. Finally, there is Rosalind, who was “bossy” from the cradle, so far as I can judge. She would never play unless she could be “it.” Whether this tendency is partly inborn or merely the result of training, there is no question that some people are by nature highly dominant, others submissive. Rosalind was 100 per cent dominant! A person of that sort, whether man or woman, can’t do much real teamwork, unless under most favorable circumstances and with proper education for the purpose. Rosalind had neither. She divorced her first husband because each was determined to be the boss; she then married a man who was willing to be a good follower, with no disturbing ideas about leadership. He had always been dominated by his own mother, and when that object of worship died, he transferred his worship to Rosalind. Both of them are satisfied—but no one could pretend that the marriage is a democratic copartnership!

With such handicaps—and no one can avoid them all—it is admittedly a hard job for any couple to attain a fifty-fifty marriage. Yet some do so, and a high degree of happiness goes with it. How, then, can more people make genuine partnerships out of their marriages?

Ralph and Beulah are one couple who found a way. They were in trouble when I first met them, however, and as usual it was the woman who came for help. “My husband won’t cooperate with me,” she complained.

There were two main parts of the difficulty: (1) he did a lot of things without taking the trouble to consult her in advance, and (2) when she wanted to consult him about things that she proposed to do he would merely reply, "Oh, use your own judgment. Whatever you decide will be perfectly satisfactory to me." Neither of these attitudes on his part corresponded with her idea of co-operation.

"What is your idea of cooperation?" I asked her.

"Why, I think it means that we ought to talk things over together."

Many women think that. Many men are inclined to be nonco-operative from that point of view. They don't particularly want to talk over their own affairs, because they are afraid their wives might try to interfere; they are a bit sensitive about having any woman tell them how to run their own business. On the other hand, they don't particularly want to talk over their wives' affairs, because they are not interested or else feel that, through ignorance, they would not show up to advantage in the discussion.

I suggested this to Ralph, who came in amiably enough. They were intelligent young people with high ideals; there was nothing seriously wrong with them, but they were just blundering along in the sort of a situation that is likely to become worse, unless definite steps are taken to make it better.

Ralph added one more point: "I come home at night tired. If I had any energy left I ought to use it to study for advancement in my own work. But she always tackles me with a lot of trivial problems that I don't know anything about—and every time I find she knows the answer in advance! She doesn't really want me to tell her whether she ought to lengthen the hem of her evening gown, or put a nail over the stove to hold the dishpan. She has already made up her mind, but she just likes to think out loud—and at great length."

"Besides that," I contributed, "she is desperately anxious to please you. She wants to see whether you would oppose even the most trifling thing she intends to do."

"Well, yes," he admitted a bit grudgingly, "she is anxious to please. I'll say that for her."

"Moreover," I continued, "she really hasn't much on her mind.



She's alone all day. The big event in her life is your home-coming. She wants to talk with you. If you don't want to talk about how high the heels of her shoes should be or whether pink towels would look better in the bathroom than the present green ones, why not start a conversation on some other subject? Beat her to the punch."

He agreed, and that helped; but there was a deeper difficulty. Ralph had naturally an aggressive and dominating disposition. As a life insurance salesman, he had to be able to impose his will on others. It was easy for him to go ahead, make his own plans, and carry them out without stopping to argue. Beulah, on the other hand, was the somewhat overprotected daughter of a strong-minded mother. She had never been allowed to dominate the home and was, therefore, all the more anxious, in her own marriage, that her rights should not be disregarded. She still complained that he didn't talk over his plans—didn't give her a chance to have her say.

"If you and Ralph were paddling a canoe together," I remarked to her, "would you expect to put as much weight into it as he?"

"Naturally not. He weighs 190 pounds, and I am trying desperately to keep down to 130. He'd make it go twice as fast as I could."

"But if you paddled as hard as you could, you'd figure that you were doing your share? You wouldn't consider yourself a slacker?"

"Of course not."

"Then if you regard canoeing as a cooperative partnership—which it is—the important thing is certainly not that each pull alike. That's impossible. But it would be highly important that the two of you pull in the same direction, wouldn't it? There would be plenty of trouble if you pulled east and he pulled west!"

Needless to say, she agreed, and I went on to point out that if there were two pilots on a ship, with equal rank and rights, the all-important thing would be for them to agree where the ship was going. If they did that, each could take a turn at the wheel. One might put in twice as long hours, because of greater strength. One might be better qualified to steer the ship in certain areas which he knew well; the other would be more at home in other waters. But as long as each did his best and as long as they knew where they were going, the ship would be brought into harbor safely.

Obviously, life is too short to talk over together everything that makes up the day's work. Beulah saw the point. A real marital partnership has to be based largely on the division of labor. It makes no real difference *how* the labor is divided, so long as the partners *agree* on how it shall be divided. In one family the wife pays all the bills; in another, the husband. The important thing is that the bills are paid and that there are clear understanding and full agreement as to who is to pay them.

In the successful family partnership, probably 95 per cent of all the problems are handled automatically by one partner or the other, through a division of labor agreed to in advance. This leaves time to discuss the other five per cent, which involve real matters of policy, and to arrive at a decision about them.

How is one to reach a decision on them? Largely by having an agreed goal.

If husband and wife agree on their goal, they can probably reach it. It may not be a good goal, according to your ideas or mine. One of the most harmonious couples I know seem to recognize only one important goal—that of social climbing. They are determined to get to the top in the southern mill town where they live. Anything that comes up is weighed by them, almost instinctively, as to whether or not it will advance their social aspirations. If so, either will agree to almost any sacrifice. If not, neither is interested, no matter how good a measure it might be otherwise.

So with the two pilots of the ship—they can reach any harbor, as long as they agree on the harbor for which they are heading. The important thing, then, is for them to agree on a harbor that has as many attractions as possible.

Similarly in marriage, husband and wife can have the most exalted and praiseworthy goals; but if each has a different goal, they will always be in trouble. The best goal, obviously, is the success of the marriage itself; and if each refers everything to the test of whether it will promote the success of their marriage, there will be little occasion for squabbling.

Ralph and Beulah worked out their difficulties in this way during the next few months, with an occasional setback but with no serious mishaps. At my suggestion, he tried consciously to avoid riding roughshod over the rights of a sensitive wife. Beulah, aware

that he was trying to be considerate, checked any tendency to oppose him through mere negativism and obstructionism.

They agreed on a division of labor in many things. Beulah convinced herself that it would please Ralph more to have her make out the dinner menu alone, than to consult him in advance and force him to commit himself to every item before it was ordered, after having considered every possible alternative. "He's really an easy man to cook for," Beulah confided to me one day.

On the other hand, each saw that it would be necessary to make a few adjustments toward the common goal of successful marriage. Ralph gave more time to companionship with his wife—after all, the life insurance game wouldn't look good to him if he lost her through it. Beulah, recognizing that his business success was necessary to their marriage, ceased to pout and sulk if he had to take an evening for a conference of agents.

As long as he lives, Ralph will retain his natural tendency toward dominance. Nothing can change that. But partners do not have to be exactly alike: and they never are! The important thing is that they agree on their objective, that they share responsibilities through division of labor, and that each of them does his best for the success of the partnership.

### ARE YOU A REAL PARTNER IN MARRIAGE?

1. You are willing to work on a church committee even if the job assigned to you is selling tickets.
2. You get the point of view of the door-to-door canvasser, yet you do not lose your own sales resistance.
3. You depend on expert ratings, rather than on the neighbors, for guidance in choosing a new automobile.
4. You believe that women are just as good as men—and that men are just as good as women.
5. If the president snubs you at a meeting of the Woman's Club you do not become emotional, but merely ask yourself, "*Why* did that happen?"

6. You feel that, to make a marriage successful, it is more important to *be* the right partner than it is to *find* the right partner.
7. When you start out to clean the closet or the attic, you carry the job through without any pushing or any intermissions.
8. When you have agreed that your husband shall be responsible for keeping his own desk straightened up, you control carefully your tendency to suggest that he is neglecting it.
9. You serve meals on time.
10. If you are invited to go to the beach for a month with your mother, your first thought is not "Will I enjoy it?" but "Will it help our marriage?"

Such characteristics as the foregoing are good indicators of a real cooperative attitude. If you find that you lack many, try to cultivate them.

# 4

## *Marriage Is for Adults Only*

YES, it's true that children can marry, so far as the law goes. In a number of states a boy can marry legally at 14, a girl at 12. But real marriage, the effective union of two personalities, is scarcely possible except to two persons who have grown up—and physical maturity is not the most important element. Emotional maturity is a decisive factor in marriage, and it does not necessarily go with physical growth.

There is Andrew, for example, who is six feet two, weighs 199 pounds, and has the emotional maturity of a four-year-old child, still tied to his mother's apron strings. Another example is Mildred, old enough to vote but often behaving like an infant of six months, engrossed wholly in the absorbing task of thinking about herself and figuring what she can get out of the world.

There are many phases of emotional maturity, but let's concentrate for a few minutes on those concerned with the development of the love life—those five familiar stages through which human beings ordinarily pass in the process of growing up:

1. The infant loves himself. He is concerned wholly with the gratification of his own wants, the satisfaction of his own desires; and he is indifferent to the sufferings of others so long as his own demands are met. His parents may need sleep—what does he care about that? He won't hesitate to keep them awake all night if he wants a little nourishment, or even merely a little sociability.

2. The child goes on to expand his love life by taking in his parents, particularly the mother (or her substitute). Perhaps this is primarily because she does more for him, but he soon comes to feel that she means more to him than does anyone else—and vice

versa. Now his love life turns on an axis suspended between himself and his mother. Her standards are his. What she does is right.

3. A few years later the child begins to get outside the home, emotionally, and to take an interest in those of his own age and own sex—the gang, technically speaking. Of course I am making this whole process seem simpler than it is in life, but the steps are distinguishable. The child now begins to take the standards not of his parents but of his contemporaries; he is learning to deal with his equals; he is becoming socialized. Mother has to take second place in some respects. Mother thinks Jim's corduroys ought to go to the laundry; but she is wrong so far as Jim is concerned, because the gang thinks otherwise. Mother thinks Jane should wear ribbed cotton stockings, but the gang considers sheer nylon preferable, so mother is wrong again. The child is breaking away—often to the mother's great distress—from emotional dependence on the home. At this stage, however, the interest is primarily in one's own sex. The Boy Scouts know there are girls in the world—but not particularly in *their* world. What the girls are doing is sissy stuff. There may be even antagonism between the sexes at this stage.

4. Then comes the interesting period of adolescence, in which the child's emotional horizon expands once more to take in the other sex on a level of equality. Instead of being satisfied with merely teasing the girls, Frank now finds them worth serious study. He will spend a good deal of the next 10 years trying to find out what girls are like. Inez, similarly, is interested in all boys just because they are boys and because she wants to learn more about this 50 per cent of the human race. The characteristic of this adolescent period is that it is a *generalized* interest in the other sex.

5. Little by little, during this period of trial and error, attention has been focused on one person for a longer and longer period. At first, one boy is almost as interesting as another to Edith. She goes out with a different one each time. Later in high school or college she goes with one for a whole semester before she makes a change. Soon she has "gone steady" with Matt for a whole year, only to deal herself a new hand during vacation and start off with Morgan in the fall. In her senior year she was actually engaged to Stuart, but this fell of its own weight. Little by little, she was learning what men were like, what she was like in relation to men;

she was forming her own taste, validating her own judgment. Her generalized interest at length became *specialized*, and she married Ben. Then she had grown up. She had reached the level of adult emotional maturity, which is the level of monogamy—the level at which interest is concentrated on one person of the opposite sex, as a lifelong partner in the establishment of a home.

All this takes time. Most of us go into marriage with many remnants of infantile love life; in fact, none of us is ever completely mature in every way. But some persons are so seriously arrested in their emotional development that it is extremely difficult for them to get along successfully in a relationship that demands adult behavior.

Much of the trouble in marriage grows out of these fixations. Think over your own acquaintances and recall the many people who had difficulties because they could not act like grownups—because they were trying to live an adult life with the emotional equipment of a child.

At the infantile stage, there is Halbert, who values others only in proportion as they make him love himself more. The highest level to which he could possibly aspire would be that described by Ko Ko in *The Mikado*: "I do adore that girl with passion tender—but adore myself with passion tenderer still!" \* His wife has to function mainly as an incense burner.

Similarly, Eloise admires herself so much that she wants to spend her life being admired by others—particularly by all men. Her mirror is her best friend. Just as a baby gives over endless hours to contemplating himself and enjoying his own sensations, so Eloise never tires of working over herself, dwelling lovingly on every detail. When her husband fails to admire all these aspects of his wife as much as she herself does, she becomes angry and criticizes him for being self-centered.

At the mother-love stage, there is Jeff, who wanted to live in a dreamworld and never wake up. He expected Edna to spend her whole time making a fuss over him: planning little surprises for him, sympathizing with him, arranging picnics and parties of which he was the center—in short, mothering him. He lost his job

\* Gilbert, William S., *The Mikado*. G. Schirmer, Inc., New York, n.d., p. 107.

and very nearly lost his wife before he discovered that a wife expects to be something more than a substitute mother.

Similarly, Sigrid could never make up her mind to do anything until she had consulted mama. When Alf at last told her that she would have to choose between her husband and her mother, she unhesitatingly decided to stay with the latter. Alf went to Puget Sound, got a job as an aeronautical engineer, and started life over again with a different wife—one who had been weaned.

At the gang level, there is Leslie, who is still a bit afraid of his wife but values her, nevertheless, as a hostess to entertain his men friends. He does not want to take her anywhere, especially into a social life where he might have to meet other women. He isn't a woman's man, he will tell you. His interests are in lodges and organizations (he goes to three stated meetings per week), in prize fights, in fishing, and in bringing members of the gang out to his house, where he expects Lucille to put up a good meal for them and then keep out of sight while they play poker.

Similarly, Eleanor found marriage attractive largely because it gave her a background, a source of support, and a place to entertain her own friends. "She looks on me merely as a necessary evil," her husband used to meditate bitterly. But there was nothing personal about her attitude—she looked on all other men in the same way!

At the adolescent level, there was George, who was still intoxicated by glamour just as when, in college, he decorated his room with pictures of movie actresses. He was continually criticizing his wife because she did not dress, or make up, or do her hair the way some other woman did. He was continually trying to cover up his own feeling of insecurity by making jokes at the expense of his wife, by sneering at marriage as a form of slavery. When he and Florence went out together, he usually made a fool of himself by paying so much attention to other women and neglecting her conspicuously. Naturally that led to quarrels when they got home. His defense always was, "I'm only human." Yes, indeed, human—but at the 16-year-old level of humanity.

Similarly, Rosalie had been spoiled by too many beaux. The adulation from all sides was too good to lose; after marriage she tried to ensure its continuance indefinitely. Each man who came



over the horizon was merely another challenge to make a conquest. If marriage could not furnish all the excitement of highly competitive courtship, then marriage was not good enough for her. She has already been married three times and becomes a little more aggressive, a little more neurotic, a little more desperate each year.

From one point of view, the greater part of all trouble in marriage could be described merely as failure to grow up emotionally. This does not mean that anyone is going to leave behind all those stages through which he has progressed, as the caterpillar leaves the cocoon behind when he emerges as a butterfly. In the development of the love life, it is more a matter of continually broadening the horizon, of continually enlarging the area covered. Most men, for instance, still enjoy a little mothering from their wives. Most women still like a little admiration from outsiders. There is no reason why they shouldn't. The test is: not whether these elements exist, but whether anything else exists, above and beyond them; not whether you have been childish, but whether you are still growing.

I once knew a couple who solved this problem successfully after too much adolescence had very nearly wrecked their marriage. Earl was a high school principal—the youngest in the state, it was said. He was a brilliant fellow, who thought pretty well of himself as brilliant fellows usually do. In most ways, he was a good high school administrator. His outstanding weakness was a tendency to be silly among the girls.

Several of the unmarried women teachers on his faculty would have welcomed attention from him, but he was afraid of them. Among the students he felt more sure of himself. Any pretty and somewhat precocious girl was certain to attract him. When he began to rush Lorraine, the president of the senior class, it caused a good deal of talk, and his friends were much relieved when he married her shortly after her graduation. "Now he'll settle down," they hoped.

But he didn't. He continued to make a fool of himself. In the lunchroom at noon he always deserted the faculty table and joined any available group of girls. He was frequently seen after school, driving some girl to her home. It was right on his way, he explained, and it seemed discourteous not to give her a lift

when she had a heavy load of books. Public opinion, in the small New England city where they lived, did not demand so much courtesy from him. Neither did Lorraine, who expected to acquire a secure social position as the high school principal's wife and who found herself left in their duplex apartment evening after evening to listen to the radio and weep, while Earl was at the high school "directing the drama club" or, perhaps, "watching a basketball game."

There was a lot more talk, and much of it was inspired by Lorraine's mother, who had encouraged the marriage in every possible way and now felt that the outcome was a reflection on her. Through her closest friend, wife of an influential member of the Board of Education, she got the Board to call Earl on the carpet. The session was overheated, with strong language on both sides. The president finally adjourned the session with the warning, "Your contract will be taken up for re-examination and possible revision." In plain language, the Board threatened to fire him.

Earl was now panicky and "took it out" on his wife. I happened to be drawn into the situation. It was an entirely undesirable and entirely unnecessary situation: a superior young man about to lose his job and his home; a fine young woman about to see her dream castle evaporate before her eyes.

"Everything I have done is not only innocent, but open and above board," Earl exclaimed defiantly. "It's all a lot of small-town stuff of the most contemptible kind, inspired by my precious little mother-in-law."

What could be done to make Earl grow up? He was still behaving just as he had behaved when he was a sophomore in high school instead of the principal. It was no use merely to tell him that he was adolescent. "They're all out of step but me," was his attitude.

I gave him a batch of personality tests. "I had all that stuff in teachers' college four years ago," he reminded me scornfully; but as a teacher he respected tests, and he filled them out. Several, which were unfamiliar to him, were devised to measure emotional maturity. They revealed that, on a scale where complete maturity would be 100, Earl rated 22 per cent.

"The scales aren't accurate," he protested.

"No scales are accurate," I agreed. "You're using other personality scales all the time, and you know that. But they're better than nothing, aren't they?"

"Sometimes."

"Very well, I don't know anything about you except what you tell me in your answers to these questions in the tests. This is what you said about yourself, . . ." and I went over some of the statements.

Earl had his back to the wall. He had convicted himself out of his own mouth. No matter how much it hurt his self-esteem, he had to admit that he had been acting in typically adolescent ways; that his whole outlook on life was that of an adolescent more than that of an adult.

This is the first step in dealing with emotional immaturity; get the individual to face the fact that he is immature. It is the hardest step, because his self-esteem resists making the admission, even to himself. The individual who has failed to grow up emotionally is often as self-satisfied as the Sheriff of Nottingham: "I never have yet made one mistake, I'd like to just for variety's sake." \* Hence the value of some such objective measure as the personality scale.

Now the client knows *what he really is*. The second step is to get him to know *what he ought to be*. This requires a knowledge of the general stages of emotional development—the sort of thing I outlined in the early part of this chapter. Once Earl's inner resistance was broken down, it took no time at all to make him admit that the average normal behavior for a married high school principal was different from his behavior; and he knew perfectly well what he ought to be doing. Everybody knows it!

*The third step is to do it.* This involves forming new habits, and it was not easy for Earl to give up the childish pleasure he had derived from showing off before a lot of immature school girls. He had to seek deliberately to discipline his habits, guide his feelings, and direct his good impulses in action; but the results gave him a self-confidence and a self-mastery he had never known before.

Meanwhile I was approaching the problem from other angles. One of the first steps was to subtract mother-in-law from the pic-

\* Smith, Harry B., *Robin Hood*. G. Schirmer, Inc., New York, n.d., p. 75.

ture. Then I went over the same ground with Lorraine. She was childish in many ways, as was to be expected, and she had to practice meeting Earl at a different level. She now understood *why* he behaved as he did; and she understood also why *she* said and did things that were harmful. She concentrated on increasing her own maturity, instead of nagging and scolding Earl.

Each of them, in short, took the three necessary steps for anyone who has to make up lost time in the process of growing up emotionally:

1. Know where you are.
2. Know where you ought to be.
3. Then go from where you are to where you ought to be.

Instead of neglecting his wife, Earl now tried to help her get as much as possible out of marriage and out of life. They agreed to go ahead with their family. Planning for and providing for the first baby is an experience that helps a good many young married couples to grow up.

Earl was virtually on probation for a year, because two of the Board members did not relish some remarks he had made about snoopers, busybodies, and folks who neglected to mind their own business. But the next year, along with the baby, he got a raise of \$400. I had a letter from him only a few days ago. "Adolescence is all right in its place," he remarked, "but I'm certainly getting a lot more satisfaction out of trying to be an adult; and Lorraine joins me in best regards."

### ARE YOU OLD ENOUGH TO MARRY?

1. You enjoy flirting—but only with your wife.
2. You appear not to notice that your wife dented the fender of the car, on her way home from the club meeting yesterday afternoon.
3. You always say, and really believe, that your wife has helped you to grow up.
4. You would rather have the next dance with your wife than with the "belle of the ball."

5. You wear a bow tie for some important reason of your own—not merely because your wife objects to it.
6. You say, “I told you so,” not oftener than once a week.
7. You are as polite to your wife as you would be to a perfect stranger.
8. You welcome your wife’s mother to your home as cordially as you welcome your own mother—and you mean it.
9. You are convinced that you are much happier married to your wife than you would be if married to the most glamorous movie starlet.
10. You believe, and always act as if you believed, that women are no better than men—and no worse.

If you can truthfully answer “Yes” to most of the foregoing statements, you have a good start for a successful marriage!

## 5

### *Keep Your Individuality in Marriage*

WHAT is the greatest psychological problem in marriage? Many students agree that it is the problem of preserving your *self* while at the same time surrendering it to your mate, of retaining your individuality while at the same time giving it up in favor of a partnership.

Because she has failed to analyze this problem, many a woman suffers. There is Beverly, who will not consider marriage at all. "Nothing could compensate me for the loss of my individuality," she declares. She is a successful, but unhappy, librarian.

There is Constance, mother of attractive twin girls. "Yes, they're wonderful; but nothing can fully compensate for the loss of one's own individuality," she sighs when friends congratulate her. She is an unsuccessful and an unhappy wife.

College graduate women have a divorce rate four times as high as is that of college graduate men, according to a study by the federal Office of Education. Moreover, the divorce rate of the men has been at a standstill for many years while that of the women is rising steadily and rapidly. One of the reasons, I suspect, is the feeling of many educated women that they are losing their individuality through marriage.

What happens when you feel that you are being robbed of such a priceless possession? Naturally you fight to retain it. Even if you are a clinging vine by nature, you won't cling peacefully.

David is a well-to-do young banker, and his wife presides over a beautiful home; but she is by no means happy in it. Her brother,

a psychoanalyst, told me of the difficulty. "David is extraordinarily dependent on her, emotionally," he explained. "Of course he feels this, unconsciously, as a threat to his ego. So he fights against this threat by bullying and browbeating Martha. He tries continually to reassure himself as to his own independence by combating the person who has taken it away from him."

The wife who appears to be dominated by her husband is, therefore, often quite happy. Our studies show that the aggressive, overactive wife is likely to be the discontented partner. Her aggressive drive is merely a reflection of her dissatisfaction with marriage and with herself.

All this is no superficial matter—it reaches far down into the depths of personality. If the educated American woman is the most conspicuous sufferer, it is partly because she has had "independence" and "self-expression" taught her so insistently, without any adequate guidance to attain it. Her attempts to deal unaided with this profound and obscure problem are too often based merely on infantile self-assertion. Of course they fail.

There is Mrs. Z., for instance, whose divorce was recently announced. She could not feel that she was expressing her own individuality unless she took a full-time job outside the home. She did not have enough vitality to carry two full-time jobs, she told people; and since she couldn't slight her job at the County Welfare Department without being discharged, she slighted her job as a wife.

Mrs. A. manifests a feeling of futility by a "pressure of activity." She is always in a hurry, always trying to give the appearance of having something important to do. She moves the furniture from one room to another—and in two weeks has it back at the point of departure. She is always moving things from the closet to the attic—and back again. She is like a child who climbs into the family automobile and honks the horn. The car does not go anywhere, but it does make a satisfying noise.

Mrs. K. does not even make a pretense of activity; she relies on cocktails to make her forget her dissatisfaction with marriage, to give her a fictitious sense of importance.

By no means all the dissatisfaction in marriage traces back to a feeling of lost individuality, to a lack of self-expression; but it is a more common cause of unhappiness than is sometimes realized.

Yet it need not be. Since every human being faces the same problem of being a partner without ceasing to be an individual, and since the majority of all marriages are happy, it is evident that most people do solve this problem successfully. Many work it out even after they have made a false start.

Roger and Marilyn are one such couple.

Although Marilyn was introduced to me as "Mrs. Smith," I noted that she was not wearing a wedding ring. The happily married wife rarely forgets that. The wife who has never accepted her marriage emotionally is the one likely to appear in public with the ring finger unringed.

She sat down, and I waited for her to open the conversation. Occasionally the first remark a person makes in such circumstances is significant. It was in this case, but there was nothing subtle or mysterious about it. She fidgeted uncomfortably for a few moments and then burst out almost explosively. "Dr. Popenoe, I want to be myself!"

"What seems to be holding you back?" I inquired.

"My husband—that is, my marriage. I mean, I don't seem to be able to find my place in the world. I've just come from the annual convention of my sorority. I talked with the dean of women of my college, and she advised me to talk it over with you."

We talked it over for a couple of hours, while her tension gradually relaxed. As usual, her problem began before she was born, in the unhappy marriage of her own parents. As an only child, she received more attention than was good for her. Her mother attempted to find her emotional satisfaction in life through her daughter rather than through her husband. She pushed little Marilyn forward to "speak a piece" or exhibit her feeble talent for tap dancing on every possible occasion. She spent a good deal of money on fraudulent "academies" and agents who had almost guaranteed a successful Hollywood career for Marilyn as a child prodigy. The girl was brought up to think that she had a great future of some kind, but it was always just around the corner.

This continued through high school and college, where she kept well to the front through her aggressiveness and a fondness for dramatics. Then, almost at the end of her senior year, she became engaged to Roger.

"How did that happen?" I asked.



"Moonlight and roses," she quoted in reply with an affectation of cynicism which I soon found was merely a pose. "Besides, I knew some of the other girls were going to announce their engagements at the time of graduation. I didn't like to be left out. It seemed particularly worth while to announce that I was going to marry the football captain. Lots of other girls were willing to do so. Roger's family was well off, and I thought he could give me the opportunity I sought for self-realization."

"But he didn't?"

"Well, he let's me do anything I want to."

"Isn't that enough?"

She thought for a long while. "I guess the trouble is I don't know what I want."

"How about children? Most people want them."

She looked a bit uncomfortable. "He's anxious to have a family right away. I want to wait until I have made a place for myself in the world—a place in my own right."

"Tell me some more about Roger. Does he, too, feel that in marrying he jeopardized his own individuality?"

"I don't think so. He's busy with his work. Anyhow, he's a man."

"And you think men don't lose their individuality in marriage as women do?"

"That's it. If I had work to do as he has, I could be well satisfied with our marriage too."

It was the old resentment against a feeling of undue dependence. So far, she had turned this resentment largely against marriage as an institution. But it was probable that she would soon begin to "take it out" on Roger personally, unless she could get a better perspective. For some weeks I worked from that point of view.

"You think marriage narrows your personality, Mrs. Smith. Can't you see that it broadens your personality, instead? When 'two become one' that means that each one is doubled but not duplicated. You are still all you were before, plus all that he is, since he is now a part of you. As a fact, therefore, your individuality is greatly enlarged, enhanced, extended, as is also Roger's."

It was hard for her to make that idea part of her thinking, but she finally got rid of a lot of childishness—the child's desire to be "it," to keep any other child from playing with his toys, to

attract attention whenever visitors appeared. She began to get an adult feeling of partnership instead of a childish and neurotic feeling of dependence.

But she still wanted a job.

In order to help her crystallize her ideas about outside activity, we gave her a battery of vocational tests. She had no outstanding talent but, like most people, could adapt herself fairly well to a great many things. On the other hand, when we helped her to think through the problem she recognized that she was not looking for a "career." She knew she had a good husband, she was much in love with him, and she wanted to be a successful wife. But as a part of that she wanted, properly enough, a feeling of self-realization.

She had grown up with a strong tendency to self-assertion and was not qualified to be an inconspicuous cog in a large machine. But she was willing to tackle anything singlehanded, and we helped her to take part in church activity which involved going from door to door. An introvert would have fled from such an assignment, but it fitted Marilyn's desire for attention and also made her feel that she was doing something worth while.

At this point Roger grew restless.

He, too, needed some re-education. He had become the local representative for his father's factory and was very busy getting dealers to stock the right make of mirrors and picture frames. He was taking no recreation at all. He had expected that his wife would devote herself to making a home, without thinking much about what either of them would do with that home. He had not visualized any other need that his wife might have for self-expression. His work kept him busy; her work ought to keep her busy. He had acquiesced in various experiments that she made, but he admitted to me that he was deeply concerned.

"You know how many marriages break up because the wife is drawn away from the home," he expostulated. "Pretty soon they explain that they will always be good friends, but that they find they have divergent interests, so they have agreed to separate. I didn't marry her for that."

"All right, the primary interest for both of you must be in the home."

"That's my idea exactly."

"Her work is largely in the house as an administrator, yours is outside getting the financial support."

"Precisely, and it keeps me busy."

"You're doing well. Now outside of the 'homework' there would be three circles of activity. In one of these you will both join. It involves your normal social life, recreation, vacations, and the like. Another circle represents her individual activities, which she is still trying to find. The third circle represents your individual activities. What are they?"

He thought a moment. "I don't have any separate outside activities. I have my hands full already."

"Then you'll have to reorganize. Working hard all day and coming home merely to eat and sleep is not enough. You'll have to put more than that into marriage. You need a separate outlet of your own, just as she does."

"Now look here, Dr. Popenoe, I'd like to argue that with you. Suppose she gets an outside job, which she says she wants. Won't she become so much interested in it that she will neglect the home? She already has a tendency that way. What I want is to see her take more interest in the home rather than less; and particularly, as you know, to take an interest in starting a family."

"Did you ever go to a three-ringed circus?" I inquired.

He looked somewhat disgusted. "Of course I did, when I was a kid."

"Then you know the idea. Why don't you establish one in your own home? A big ring in the center, and a smaller ring at each side."

He seemed puzzled—to decide whether I was insulting him or merely making fun of him.

"No, I mean it. This whole thing is merely a question of proportion, Mr. Smith. Let's leave the actual job of homemaking, whether administratively for her or financially for you, out of the picture for a moment. We're all agreed on the importance of that, anyway.

"Now, beyond that, the Smith family must run a three-ringed circus. You need a ring of your own, in which you can perform. She won't be in it at all."

He disagreed. "I thought husband and wife were supposed to have everything in common."

"Nonsense. You know it can't be done, and it would be intolerably boring if it could. What a husband and a wife need are not identical interests, but *sympathy with each other's aims and interests*. You need to cultivate some of the men's clubs and organizations, and have at least a small area of life which is yours alone."

"Well, . . ."

"That's your ring in the circus. Of course your wife needs a similar ring. You won't be in it, but you will be glad she has it."

"Yes, but. . . ."

"But as you know very well, those rings must not be allowed to grow too large. How can we prevent that? By having a third ring, the main ring, in which the two of you perform together as a team; and by making certain that the main ring is twice as large as either of the others.

"In other words, each time that you go somewhere alone, you'll take pains to go somewhere else with her.

"Each time she does something alone, she'll make it a point to do something else with you.

"That means that you and Mrs. Smith will have twice as many interests and activities as partners, as you will as individuals. You'll therefore keep the center of gravity where it belongs, in the partnership; but at the same time each partner individually will be enriching his life in such a way as to be a better partner."

The idea of a three-ringed circus appealed to both Roger and Marilyn, but neither one quite realized how many adjustments it would require. Roger found time to join a bowling team (he had been intercollegiate champion one year), and to do some community work for a service club. To balance this, he devoted a great deal more time to Marilyn. Sometimes they would go out together, sometimes they would sit at home and read.

Marilyn found that she could not give an unlimited amount of time to church work without destroying the balance. She began to build up a circle of friends whom Roger also enjoyed, so that the two of them could go out together. Gradually they reached an

equilibrium, in which the three-ringed circus ran more and more smoothly. Each applauds the other's solo performance; then they go out to have a good time as Mr. and Mrs. Smith.

You can keep your individuality, and your marriage too, if you have a sense of proportion.

### HOW SUBMISSIVE ARE YOU?

1. You allow the salesman to come in and demonstrate his vacuum cleaner, even though you already have a satisfactory one.
2. You often cross the street to avoid meeting someone you know slightly.
3. If you call for a dress that you left to be cleaned and find that it is not ready as promised, you walk out with no comment or complaint.
4. At a committee meeting you never speak up, even though you know you have a good idea.
5. If you are in line at the ticket window of the motion picture theater and other people keep pushing ahead of you, you decide not to wait but go quietly away.
6. At a reception, you make no effort to meet the guest of honor.
7. If you are near the scene of an automobile accident you leave quickly, figuring that your help is not needed.
8. When introduced to the state president of the Congress of Parents and Teachers, you feel markedly self-conscious.
9. Invited to a dinner, you do not want to accept until you have telephoned your friends to find out what they are going to wear.
10. When your husband takes you down town for dinner, you always insist that he choose the restaurant.

If most of these statements apply to you, you are low in self-assertion and should watch yourself to make sure that you do not

more or less unconsciously fight your husband in protest. But if none of these statements applies to you, watch yourself even more carefully, for you may be of an aggressive and dominating disposition! Statistically speaking, the submissive wife is likely to be happier in marriage than the aggressive wife. The latter's aggressiveness may be merely a way of protesting against the fear of losing her individuality.

## 6

### *Make Jealousy Work for You*

JEALOUSY is another of the qualities that women have copied from men. Among lower animals, it is only the male who shows jealousy. But, in the United States, every study that has been made reveals jealousy to be more common and a more serious problem among women. Many a husband complains that his wife is too jealous.

Wives sometimes complain that their husbands are not jealous enough! "Really, it seems as if Bill is merely indifferent," Carol asserts. "I'd like him to show a little interest in what I do."

"Maybe he's one of the men who think that 'a wife who has to be watched isn't worth watching.'"

"Of course, he knows and I know that he can trust me fully. But I think every woman enjoys feeling that her husband is on his toes. The man who is indifferent isn't likely to work very hard to maintain his marriage, is he?"

"No," I replied, "I quite agree with you on that. The pose of some radical groups, which pretend to abolish jealousy, is often merely a cover for abolishing marriage. And I certainly agree with you that there is too much indifference in marriage. But if you stop to think of some of the childishly jealous, brutally jealous, and insanely jealous husbands you know or have heard about, you won't want to change Bill *too* much."

I thought of several myself—each one with a different style of jealousy but each one a serious problem. There was Lloyd, whose jealousy grew out of a paranoid trend. I'm not calling him names by saying that—a paranoid trend is a common and sometimes a

socially useful thing. Plenty of paranoids have made their mark on American history: John C. Calhoun, Charles Sumner, Thaddeus Stevens, John Quincy Adams, for example. I think most psychologists would tell you that Woodrow Wilson and Georges Clemenceau were good illustrations of that type of personality, too. The paranoid is the man to stand by his guns, to lead a forlorn hope, to fight for his principles to the last ditch. But the basic ingredients are conceit and suspicion, and Lloyd showed them in the worst, rather than in the best, light. Even on the honeymoon, he spent a large part of his time watching the baggage for fear someone would steal it. At home he was always going around at night to see if all the windows were locked. He was suspicious of every man who dealt with him in business. He was equally suspicious of his wife. If she said she would be home all day, he would phone the house on some pretext to find whether she was really there. He would steam the envelopes of her letters open and read them, then seal them again. One day he insisted that they give their trade to a different grocery, after he saw her talking too vivaciously, as he thought, to a clerk in the Central Market. His jealousy, based on paranoid suspicion, was an endless nuisance.

Elliot's jealousy was based mainly on insecurity. He had married an attractive woman considerably younger than himself. He feared continually that she might have married him for his money and that her affections could go to some younger and better man. He was not sure of himself, so he took it out on her.

Milton's jealousy was a projection, as the psychologists say—that is, he imputed to his wife what was really in his own mind. He was a good-natured, likable, but superficial fellow. The only work he had ever done was to help papa spend mama's money. He was a semiprofessional philanderer, emotionally adolescent and wanting to make a conquest of every woman he met who gave him the slightest encouragement. He was always watching his wife to be sure she wasn't flirting—the reason being that he himself always wanted to flirt with some other woman. He could respect himself more, apparently, if he made himself believe that it was his wife, not himself, who was always looking for a chance to philander.

Each of these three husbands had made his wife miserable by his jealousy, but the basis of the jealousy was in each case different



—at first sight, anyhow. The history of each of them could have been matched by that of some wife—of many wives, indeed—who had similar difficulties. Take Olga, for instance. Her husband and I collaborated on a long re-education for her.

"She's jealous at home and abroad, by night and day, in season and out of season, generally and specifically," he exclaimed as he told me his story. "She's jealous because I like to play poker with some of the men at the plant. She's jealous because I don't ask the head of the bureau to fire all the stenographers in the office—whom he hires, not I. She's jealous because, when we go to a party, I dance with the hostess as soon as I can do so conveniently. She's jealous—well, let's put a period right there. That's enough. She's jealous."

Husbands often deal with such a situation in one of three ways. One group tries to avoid trouble by neglecting and evading the wife more and more—just keeping away from home to keep out of difficulties. Of course that makes matters worse.

Another group meets it by explaining and complaining, by denouncing and pleading, by arguing and expostulating. Of course that makes matters worse.

A third group says, "If that's the way she feels about it, I'll give her something to be jealous about." Of course that makes matters worse.

"What shall I do?" Olga's husband demanded.

"Let's start this way: *why* do you resent her jealousy?"

He was irritated. "Who wouldn't?" he demanded impatiently. "All right, I'll analyze it the way you do: first, because it is wholly unwarranted; second, because it is a childish interference with my personal freedom; third, because it reflects unfavorably on my character; fourth, because it is destroying our social life; fifth, because. . . ."

"I agree with them all in advance," I interposed. "Let's go a long way further back. What do you think your wife had a right to expect from her marriage to you?"

To summarize, we agreed that among other things she (like every other wife) was entitled to *growth* and *security*. "You chemists are always going by formulas," I told him. "There's your formula for this compound. She is entitled to opportunities for

growth, and she certainly needs them. She has acted in a childish way. You have admitted to me, on the other hand, that your reactions have been childish, too, so you really haven't helped her as much as you intended to. Our first job is to give her ample facilities for growth, mentally and emotionally, so she can live up to the responsibilities of a marriage to which she has, in many other respects, so much to contribute.

"The second essential is a feeling of security—emotional security, mainly, because there is no question about her physical security, her financial security, and so on. You're everything to her. Of course the slightest threat to this situation makes her feel insecure. Our second job is to provide such conditions that she will feel secure.

"Growth and security! She needs them, you need them, we all need them. Neither one alone is enough. Growth without security is chaos. Security without growth is stagnation. You can't build mental hygiene or human happiness on chaos or on stagnation. Let's see how we can keep them in balance."

All this involved a little more attention from the husband, who had undoubtedly been so much impressed by the need of the nation's industries for sulfuric acid that he had not given as much time and thought to his marriage as it deserved. It involved a more satisfactory social life for the couple, more participation by the wife in community activities, and some help to her in budgeting and household management. It involved an improvement in their sexual adjustment. Circumstances were such that I never had an opportunity to meet Olga, but her husband solved the problems successfully in short order. She is still growing, and so is he.

Olga's childish exhibitions of jealousy might easily have destroyed her marriage. Luck was with her; she had a husband who was able and willing to understand her needs, to recognize the source of her jealousy, and to rebuild the background in such a way that her energies were used constructively instead of destructively. For jealousy itself need not necessarily be thought of as an unworthy thing. A man is said, for instance, to be jealous of his reputation for fair dealing or jealous of the good name of his college. It is not a reproach but a word of praise. Think of jealousy, if you like, as meaning that you legitimately possess something

valuable and are determined to defend your possession of it. You'd be a fool if you didn't! But you can defend that possession by ineffective, dishonest, or suicidal methods; or you can defend it by intelligent, well-planned, and successful methods.

Olga had a home and a husband. There would have been something the matter with her, if she had not determined to make every effort to keep them. She could—and did—try to keep them by infantile tantrums, by suspicion, by nagging, and by threatening. She might, alternatively, have tried to keep them by becoming indispensable to them. From this point of view of deliberate planning and constructive action, some wives need a little more jealousy than they now exhibit.

Josephine was such a person. She had a long fight—against herself. But it looks now as if she had won a complete victory.

At first she did not want to fight. "I'm through," she announced. "He belongs to me, but the last thing in the world I would want would be a husband who was mine when he didn't want to be. If he hasn't any self-respect, I certainly won't let him rob me of mine. I'm through," she repeated.

"He doesn't want you any more?"

"Evidently not."

"*Evidently*, you say. To whom is it evident? To you only? Or to him? To your parents? To the neighbors? To me? Can you make it evident to me?"

"I don't know how much evidence you'd need," she answered bitterly. "If a married man spends evening after evening with another woman, if he takes that woman out to lunch almost every day, if he sends that woman flowers on her birthday and forgets his wife's birthday, I'd think it was evidence."

"How long have you been married?"

"A year next month."

"And how long has that sort of thing been going on?"

"All the time. It's a continuation of what was going on before—only I didn't know it at the time I married him."

"Tell me all about it."

Ian was a writer for the movies, I learned. The "other woman" was in the publicity department of the same organization. She was

a clever and energetic person some years older than Ian, who could do a lot for him professionally. He owed part of his success to the publicity she gave him. He was cultivating her deliberately, perhaps a bit calculatingly, for that reason. She, on the other hand, was ambitious to graduate from publicity into scenario writing and picked up lots of ideas from him. It was a mutually profitable alliance for business purposes—and nothing more. Josephine's account made it sound much worse than it really was. Ian was a straightforward and honorable man. He was often working under pressure, however, at irregular hours, and had not fully recognized the need of organizing his home life on a permanent basis.

Josephine and I discussed Ian's informal business partnership at length. "If Miss N. were a man, you wouldn't object to it," I suggested.

"Of course not." She fidgeted as if she read an implication into my question, then accepted the implication. "Yes, I'm jealous," she declared defiantly. "I guess any woman would be, in the same place."

"Unfortunately, no."

She stared at me. "Why do you say that?" she demanded suspiciously.

"Merely because it's true. Some girls would be simply indifferent. They would refuse to make any effort to improve the situation. They'd simply say, 'I'm through,' and walk out. Then there would be another unnecessary divorce."

She winced and reddened at my quotation of her own statement, but it challenged her effectively as I intended. She contemplated the open tip of her shoe for a moment and then shot back, almost explosively, "What would *you* do?"

"I'd fight."

"That's not my idea of marriage—a perpetual fight with my husband."

"Nor mine either. Don't fight your husband. Fight yourself."

Perhaps it was merely curiosity that moved her to explore the possibilities of this advice, for she had unconsciously pictured herself as an innocent and much abused creature and had put the blame for her feelings entirely on her husband. If Ian neglected

her it was certainly not her fault, but his! Like most of us, she was jealous. Like most of us, she failed to use this jealousy constructively.

"Can't you look on your jealousy merely as a danger signal?" I asked. "Let's take it simply as a warning to you that your marriage is not satisfactory. If your marriage isn't satisfactory, it's a good thing to have some warning. That may save your life—conjugally speaking. Many a man has been killed by starting his automobile in the garage on a cold morning and letting the engine run to warm it up. The poisonous fumes from the exhaust give no warning; he is dead before he realizes that he is breathing them. If the fumes were loaded with asafetida or skunk oil so that he smelled them the moment they began to pour into the closed garage, he'd start immediately for the door. Let's regard your feeling of jealousy as a useful warning—more than that, as a motivation, a mainspring, to produce some sort of action.

"If your feeling of jealousy makes you a less attractive, efficient, and successful wife than you were before you felt it, you will be the loser. Lots of women use it that way. They expect a husband to treasure them because of their high nuisance value. I'm continually trying to convince wives that you can't club a husband into loving you more—that you can't make him more attentive and romantic by nagging, whining, bullying, or abusing him. Their jealousy is working against them. It produces resentment; and resentment is something that spreads as rapidly as a grass fire, in marriage.

"Make your jealousy work *for* you. Let it be a source of energy to direct your activities into the right channels."

During the ensuing weeks we explored various channels to determine which were the right ones for her marriage. In the first place, it was evident that she ought as far as possible to ignore the existence of Miss N. That was a phase of her husband's business to which she could not contribute, and she would be well advised to act as if she had never heard of Miss N.

It was also evident to Josephine, by this time, that her real job was to improve her own personality. Her jealousy was a red flag to warn that there was danger ahead unless she tackled this

job promptly. She did a lot of reading in this field and came in one day with a definite program.

"I still think it's largely a matter of definition," she protested, "but assuming as you say that jealousy is really a civilizing force if properly used, that it has really been a cement to hold family life together through the ages, then I'd like to see what you think of this scheme: I'm going to work for development in four directions.

"First, for self-confidence. I can see now that lack of self-confidence has been a great part of my difficulty. I'll strive for this by being more ready to accept responsibility, by improving my management of the home, by taking more part in activities outside the home that I know I can do successfully. . . ."

"If so," I interrupted, "you'll succeed."

"The second thing will be a little more normal social life for Ian and me. I used to refuse to go out with him to a lot of places, because I felt that I didn't show up to advantage among the people. My people were in Chicago, so we didn't go with them. The result was that we didn't go together anywhere, very much. I'll go with him now and won't think I have to show off—I'll just be a good listener and Ian's wife.

"The third thing will be to try to make him a little more comfortable. After all, he does lead a hectic life. The studio is a madhouse most of the time, especially when the boss comes on from New York. Ian needs a home that will be a haven for him, a place of rest and retreat, where he will find understanding and peace."

"What book did you get that from?" I teased; for by this time she was no longer on the defensive.

"It wasn't one of yours," she retorted, "but it sounds good, doesn't it? And finally, I'm going to cultivate a little jealousy and keep it on hand. My grandmother, back on the farm in Illinois, always kept a little yeast from one baking to the next, so she could make bread any time she wanted to. I'm going to keep a small amount of jealousy—a carefully selected strain, a pure culture—in a covered crock in the kitchen, or somewhere, and put a little of it into our marriage every week, to make sure it will rise.

"When I first came to see you, the trouble was that I was

ashamed to be jealous. Of course I ought to have been ashamed, the way I was sulking and pouting and emoting at the time. I wish I had known a year ago that I could make jealousy work for me if I handled it like an adult. I was certainly a fool."

"You were certainly a good learner," I answered.

### HOW IS YOUR JEALOUSY WORKING?

1. You buy a blue dress because your husband particularly admires you in blue, even though the saleslady tells you that the cerise is more stunning.
2. When your husband completely forgets that he promised to take you to the movies Monday night, you do not sulk for 48 hours and at the same time refuse to tell him why you are sulking.
3. You do not expect him to get his own breakfast while you stay in bed, when both of you were out late together the night before.
4. You do not leave a couple of pairs of stockings soaking in the washbasin when he wants to shave.
5. You save money on other things in order to be able to get lingerie of a little better quality.
6. When your husband expects that you will be late in getting started to the church supper, you are ready five minutes ahead of time.
7. You never serve breakfast clad in pajamas and with hair uncombed.
8. If your husband remarks that Mrs. Jones is a very attractive woman, you agree with him heartily.
9. You avoid "ostentatious lamentation" and expressions of self-pity that are designed merely to get expressions of sympathy from him.
10. You ask yourself at least once a week, "Is my husband getting

out of marriage everything that he has a right to expect from it?"

If your behavior corresponds in a general way to the foregoing specifications, it is pretty good evidence that you are on the job—that you are prepared to do your full share and more, to make your marriage successful, and that your jealousy is finding a constructive, not a destructive, outlet.



## *Improve Your Husband Scientifically*

HOME for Christmas, Elizabeth is telling her mother about the man she is going to marry. "You'll love him," she declares. "He has great possibilities. Of course he isn't a college graduate, and he's a bit rough in some ways—but he's a rough diamond. I know I can do a lot for him."

"How?" her mother asks cautiously.

"Why, by helping him to improve himself. I'm going to make him more ambitious."

"Isn't it pretty hard for one person to improve another, Liz?"

"Not if you have good material to work with. Look at *Pygmalion*. Remember when you and I saw it at that little theater on the beach?"

"That was just a movie."

"Now, mother, don't try to discourage me. You don't know Albert yet. I can do a whole lot for him."

Why does a wife want to improve her husband? For the same reason, of course, that a husband wants to improve his wife. Her determination to improve the man she marries is usually due to one or both of two reasons:

First, it makes her feel superior. She inflates her own ego by pointing out the derelictions of her husband. It's merely a way of telling him and herself that "I'm better than you are." That is an infantile sort of behavior.

Second, because her own personality is too inadequate, too limited, too immature to love *a man*. She can love only *part* of a man. That is an equally infantile sort of behavior.

Take Liz herself, of whom the American Institute of Family Relations later saw a good deal because she left Albert and moved to Pasadena after a year or two of marriage. He was a quiet, sensitive, tender, and sincere fellow; he could have been a wonderful husband and father—and Liz herself finally recognized that fact, although not until she had been away from him for several months. But when she came to us she was discouraged, disillusioned, disgusted. "The type of man I admire," she explained, "is the active, energetic, ambitious man, who has enough drive and determination to go right to the top."

If she wanted that type she should have married someone else, not Albert. But no man is merely a type; nor does any one man combine in himself all possible types. If Liz could love only one type, she could not love at all. If she had found a man who was of the go-getter type she would have found, in time, that he was also a lot of other things which would not have suited her. Then she could not have loved him any more! "He's a good man," she would have explained, "but very different from my ideal."

Most of the qualities we try to "improve" in our partners are therefore merely reflections of the inadequacy of our own personalities. There was Ellery, of whom we also saw a good deal, years ago. He wanted our help in trying to make Eloise more light-hearted and gay, more sparkling and stimulating. "I like a vivid girl," he explained. He was merely revealing his own limitations, was merely trying to recapture some trivial experience of childhood which he had not outgrown. Analysis brought the probable cause to light—his association in the eighth grade with little Maryellen, who was certainly a sparkler—while she lasted. She "went Hollywood," was a comic cut-up in minor parts in the movies for a few years under four different names, and disappeared when her thyroid gland began to wear out. Married life with her would have been like a steady diet of pickled onions!

Suppose you do improve a husband? Old timers in a certain town recall a man who later got as high as a seat in the cabinet of a president in the early part of this century. He married a school teacher who was determined to make a success of him. Their engagement extended over several years, during which she was

teaching in another state. Every other day he wrote his fiancée a love letter. Every other day she sent it back to him carefully corrected with a red pencil as to grammar and chirography, syntax and orthography. She improved him! But maybe she did something else to him. He left the cabinet in disgrace—one of the two or three cabinet members in the last 50 years who have gone out of Washington under the cloud of scandal.

Before you start to improve your husband ask yourself what the results of success would be on (1) yourself, (2) him, and (3) the future of your marriage.

I argued this one day—one month, to be more exact—with Liz herself, whom I introduced at the beginning of this chapter. She had finally given Albert an ultimatum: she was going to visit her parents and she would return to him if and when he demonstrated the energy and aggressiveness that she wanted to see. She came to Pasadena overflowing with sympathy for herself, and her mother sent her to the Institute.

"I could have done so much for him!" she lamented. "And after all, everything I wanted him to do was for his own good."

"Well, you knew he had been interested in ranching all his life," I objected. "You couldn't expect him to undergo a complete transformation on marriage."

"Why not?" she demanded. "Isn't love a power that transforms the individual and. . ."

"Did it transform you?"

She squirmed visibly but recovered her balance in a moment and went on, ignoring my interruption: "How often one hears of a man being transformed by the love of a woman!"

"You mean by *his* love for *her*?"

"Yes."

"It's important to note that; *she* isn't transforming him. He's transforming himself."

"The result is the same, isn't it?"

"But the *process* is quite different. You can't change a man—very much—by your own determination to do so. Perhaps I should correct that and say that you aren't likely to change him for the better! You may shake his faith in himself, break down his self-

respect or even drive him to drink after he has been a lifelong Prohibitionist.

"Fortunately, however, a *man* can change *himself*. As you say, drunkards have reformed, criminals have turned honest, due to the love of a good woman. But this wasn't something that the woman imposed on the man. It was a change growing out of the creative experience of living with her and loving her. She couldn't change him by any manipulation or management. He could change himself by loving her. Consequently the woman's job—and about the only thing she can do profitably for this purpose—is to make herself lovable!"

This was a new idea to Elizabeth. Like most of us, she had unconsciously thought of herself as being lovable enough for anybody. She was a frequent visitor during the ensuing four weeks and whenever she came she was as steady a talker as I permitted her to be—for I had to do a good deal of talking to keep her on the track. From our office she would go home and go over the same ground with her mother, a levelheaded woman who was sparing of words (to judge by the few conversations I had with her over the phone) but who apparently made a perfect sounding board for Liz. By the time the daughter had told me something, gone home, and told it to her mother, then returned the next day and told it to me again, she had had to listen to it three times. That was in many instances enough to convince her that it wasn't convincing!

From some notes which I made at the time, there seem to have been seven main points on which Liz and I conversed.

1. You fell in love with him for what he is. His quiet assurance of strength comforted you. You yourself are a restless person; there was repose in his calmness. The same repose and comfort are still there awaiting you, if you have sense enough to know it. Those are traits on which you can depend as long as he lives, and they will seem more valuable from year to year. *Keep on loving him for what he is.*

2. *He can't be everything.* He can't be at the same time a tower of calm strength such as you need and a whirlwind go-getter such as you profess to admire. If he could by some miracle (or tempo-

rarily through mental disease!) become the latter, he would cease to be the former. You'd probably feel that you had lost a great deal more than you had gained. Or if by some extra double super-colossal miracle he did acquire in one person all the good traits that human nature can know, do you think you'd really be good enough to be his wife?

3. Maybe you're wrong, anyhow, about thinking that he ought to be more of a go-getter. Maybe there are already too many go-getters in the world, and not enough men like Albert. You don't know.

You want to change him, but you never can decide just how you want to change him. Today you think that he ought to take the county agency for some automobile; but last week you talked about having him go into the co-operative movement and a few days before that you asked me if I thought he was too old to begin the study of law. If you can't make up your mind for him, there's all the more reason for letting him make up his mind for himself.

He's doing what he has always wanted to do and what he is well qualified to do. According to your story, he is recognized as one of the best ranchers in the state. It's a quiet life, and some day you'll be glad that it's quiet. Besides, the ranch is a great place to bring up children! *It's not up to you to live his life for him.*

4. Yes, of course there are lots of little particulars in which a husband and wife adjust to each other. Both are changing habits and attitudes all the time. Everybody knows and always has known the best way to encourage such changes: that is, by expressing appreciation of them as they occur.

For instance, you have complained a good deal because Albert isn't more demonstrative. I think you got too many of your ideas about "the perfect lover" from the movies; but you have them, and I won't set you a bad example by trying to improve you. I'll just remind you that you can't improve Albert in this respect either, by continually complaining, hinting, nagging, and scolding him because he doesn't kiss you every time he comes in the house. You'll merely create hostility. But if you yourself will be sufficiently demonstrative, sufficiently appreciative, when he does kiss you; if you will help him to feel particularly pleased with himself,

particularly proud of himself, when he kisses you; he will certainly want to enjoy this delightful sensation more frequently.

Of course you will have to do this artistically—not too obviously and condescendingly. *Study your own technique a little more and his a little less.*

5. What are you going to do about things that are small in themselves and yet stand in his way, like errors of pronunciation? Well, you can help him there, and you ought to. I agree with you that it will be an advantage to improve himself there, and you're the one to assist.

It's all in the way you do it.

You are annoyed because he says "causal" instead of "casual." It grates on you. Next time he says it you might ask, "Is that the way it is pronounced? I have heard it called 'casual' but maybe that's wrong. Let's look it up in the dictionary." Then you can go to the dictionary and look it up with him, and he'll correct himself.

Oh, you haven't any dictionary at home? Thought you didn't need one, I suppose. Well, buy one today and take it back with you for this purpose. But you don't want to let him think you bought it merely to correct him, because he is probably a bit sensitive already about being corrected by you. You'll have to watch out for your college education. It won't do you any harm if you don't let it become offensive; but keep your eye on it.

I'll tell you how you can take a dictionary home without hurting his pride: tell him you had to get it because you were mortified to have me point out that in our casual conversation about the war, a few minutes ago, you mispronounced the name of one of the Dutch Islands, of two places in Africa, and of an important city of Russia. It's a fact. I didn't intend to mention it, not wanting to improve you; but this is a convenient time to speak of it. You probably got your pronunciations from the radio announcers, and they get theirs by intuition. So you must mention casually, on your return to the ranch, that you have added a dictionary to your equipment after having discovered that you needed it badly; and that will help!

You have tried too often to improve your husband from above

downward. *If you could improve him at all, it would have to be on one level—that is, between equals.*

6. It's improbable that you can make Albert take on the traits that you'd like him to acquire, but there's another way to get them into your marriage. *You can supply them yourself.*

After all, marriage is a partnership. You haven't quite grasped the implications of that. The implications are that neither partner does it all: there is a division of labor; each puts in what he has. In a business partnership, for instance, one partner may put in the money while the other puts in the experience, knowledge, and technical competence. In your case Albert has contributed more than his share, hasn't he? He has put in the money—that is, the ranch, and it's a good one. He has put in at least as much knowledge and experience as you because, as a matter of record, neither of you had any education for marriage. You even refused to take home economics in college because it wasn't fashionable at that college. I'll bet that when you married he was a better cook than you. (She reddened, then nodded her head in acquiescence.) So you aren't making this a real partnership—aren't even trying to do so. What you have been unconsciously trying to do is to let him do the work while you do the bossing. That's no partnership. You know what it is.

You want to see him push ahead a little more in the community: all right, you're part of him, and you're the part to get out and push. Go back and take a more active role in church work, start a Parent-Teacher organization, get wholeheartedly into national defense, volunteer for one of the women's committees in the chamber of commerce—there are plenty of things that you can do and ought to do. Meanwhile Albert can keep on with his own job of producing food to feed the world and you.

7. That will be a good example for him—which brings us back to the point of departure. It's your job to be a good example. That's the way to improve a husband scientifically. Your sympathy, your understanding, your appreciation, your recognition of his need for growth—your love, in short, will be a stimulus. *What you need to furnish is less admonition and more inspiration.* When do you start home?

Having left the ranch with an ultimatum, Liz had felt that she

would lose face if she went back voluntarily. She finally decided that her marriage was worth as much as her face and wired Albert to expect her on the Limited next day.

I had a note of thanks from her after she reached home: "Everything looks good and Albert is good," she reported. During the succeeding years several of the women on the Institute staff, with whom she had formed friendships, got occasional letters telling of her own activities. She was doing a lot of useful things; and Albert was not merely making the ranch produce bumper crops, but was treasurer of a marketing organization and was actually running for county commissioner.

The latest news came in a telephone message from her mother. "I've just had a telegram from Liz," she reported briefly. "Albert has been elected without opposition. She asked me to let you know."

I congratulated her and was about to hang up, when she became more communicative than usual. "You know, Dr. Popenoe," she commented—and I could hear a chuckle in her voice which told me that she was thinking of her daughter—"I like those last two words: *without opposition*."

"So do I. I expect to see Albert elected to the state legislature before many years. He'll go a long way—*without opposition*."

### ARE YOU SETTING YOUR HUSBAND A GOOD EXAMPLE?

1. You keep the seams of your stockings reasonably straight.
2. You never remind him that "After all, it's my money."
3. You always have a few snacks in the icebox for a late supper.
4. You don't invite the Smiths to come over and play bridge this evening, unless you have consulted him in advance.
5. You occasionally mention, unostentatiously but publicly, that any movie hero could profitably take a few lessons from your husband in how to make love artistically and convincingly.
6. You agree with him that he is a first-class cook and that his omelets are absolutely unbeatable.



7. You are ready to help your husband at his office or shop whenever you can be useful, but you don't make any suggestions for the complete reorganization of his business unless he asks you to.
8. You insist that he take the wheel when you and he are driving with some of his business associates in your car.
9. You ask yourself once in a while, "What on earth did my husband see in me that made him want to marry me?"
10. You ask yourself frequently, "What would he like to change in *me*?"

If your husband has any good points at all, such treatment as the foregoing will give him a chance to bring them out.

## 8

### *Make Your Quarrels Pay Dividends*

EVEN before the wedding, Larry and Mary quarreled a good deal. Each worried over the fact and consulted friends: "If we are fighting all the time now, do you think we'll do the same thing after marriage?"

"Lovers' quarrels are proverbial," their friends reassured them. "After you're married, you'll be different people."

Many a marriage has been wrecked on that hope. But Larry and Mary went ahead. They fought violently two or three times during their honeymoon in Florida. They came back to their new apartment in the north and settled down to a steady round of squabbling over nothing in particular. For example:

SCENE: *The dinner table.*

MARY: I wonder if you realize, honey, how long it has been since you took me out anywhere? In fact, it was more than a week ago.

LARRY: I've been awfully busy. You know that. I can't burn the candle at both ends. But we'll go to the movies tonight.

MARY: No, I don't want to go when you are just going in order to please me.

LARRY: There you are! You complain that I don't ask you, and then when I do ask you, you won't go.

MARY: You only asked me because you knew I'd refuse.

And so forth and so on. What can anyone do with such people?

Conflict is natural and necessary in life. It is so much a part of human nature that when daily life does not furnish us enough of it we invent games for the purpose of giving us more conflicts

to enjoy, more obstacles to overcome, more suffering to endure. But while pugnacity and belligerency are as natural to man as to other animals, most animals have sense enough to fight enemies other than their own kind. Man is one of the few which systematically makes war on his own species.

More genuine civilization will improve Man in this respect, but at present it may be taken for granted that people will grow up with some combative tendencies. These will be useful to the world if husband and wife fight together as a unit against evil conditions; they may be disastrous if husband and wife turn them against each other.

Unfortunately, most husbands and wives have not been trained sufficiently to act as a unit together, so they quarrel between themselves in all sorts of ways. Watch your own acquaintances and note the great variety of methods used to damage the partner.

Mrs. White refuses to laugh at her husband's jokes, when he tells them in company. If she is feeling particularly vindictive she corrects his manner of telling, or pleads with patient resignation, "Oh, daddy, *must* you tell that old joke again?"

Mr. Brown punishes his wife effectively by derogatory references to members of her own family. One of his best stories concerns the time he got out of bed at 3 o'clock in the morning and went down to the police station to rescue her brother Slim, who had been brought in as "drunk and disorderly." It is full of laughs—for everyone except Mrs. Brown.

Mrs. Gray uses a charge account as a means of sticking a knife in her husband's back. If he is particularly ornery, she only smiles sweetly. When the bills come in at the end of the month, he understands.

Mr. Black annoys his spouse by calling her "old woman" very ostentatiously in public, with a pretense of affectionate geniality.

Mrs. Green long ago found out how to manage her husband by controlling their sexual life appropriately. When she wants to punish him, he knows exactly what is going to happen.

The occasions, the weapons, the purposes of conflict are unlimited in number and, human nature being what it is, a certain amount of conflict is inevitable in any marriage. It may be destructive or, in exceptional cases, constructive.

A destructive quarrel is one in which an attempt is made to damage the other *person*. The instances just cited will serve to illustrate it. A destructive quarrel always leaves the husband-wife relationship worse off than it was before.

A constructive quarrel is one in which the hostility is directed toward an *issue, a condition, a situation*. Most of us are not civilized enough to quarrel impersonally. We do not attack alcoholism; we merely attack Slim because he is a drinker. Theoretically, however, a quarrel directed toward some issue that has divided the couple might be settled in such a way as to leave the partnership on a sounder foundation than before.

For this purpose, it would have to be handled in an adult way; but most quarrels are handled in a thoroughly infantile way. Buddy and Junior in the nursery, squabbling over the privilege of taking the first ride on the velocipede, are behaving in exactly the way that mother and father are behaving in the living room, where they are squabbling over the question of which movie they will see tonight. No principle is involved—it is merely a matter of personalities. Each wants to have his own way, each wants to feel important, each wants to be the center of attention, each wants to get a feeling of power by imposing his will on another.

If a quarrel is handled in an adult way, it will be used as an occasion for each participant to ask "*Why* are we quarreling?" and to use the answer as a means to work out a more satisfactory course of conduct in which conflict on that particular point will not occur again.

Larry and Mary, with whom I started this story, were quarreling on a strictly infantile level. It became a childish game. When Mary felt she was getting the worst of it, she would rush into the bedroom and lock the door. Larry had not succeeded in finding a satisfactory way to trump this ace. Once he broke the door down, but that was expensive. On another occasion he put on his hat and went to the office. When he came home at night the house looked just as he had left it, the door was still locked, and there was no sign of life. Panicky, he feared she might have committed suicide. This time he forced open a window, raised the curtain inside—and found Mary quietly pretending to read a book and greatly enjoying the fact that her husband felt like a fool.

Funny? Not to them. And in fact there is nothing very funny about any situation which is leading two intelligent, well-educated young people to the divorce court.

After one such episode, during which he poured the breakfast coffee down the sink to show what he thought of it, Larry came home to find that Mary had packed up and gone. He knew there was only one place she could go—back to mother; but she refused to see him or to speak to him on the phone. Her mother was distressed but did not know how to handle the problem. She suggested that Larry consult the American Institute of Family Relations.

He did so, but he was not hopeful. "We're both just naturally quarrelsome," he assured me. "I don't believe we can do anything to change that, at our age."

"All right," I acquiesced. "Let's take that as permanent then, and merely try to make it useful. According to your account, you're both loaded with dynamite. Now dynamite may be put to some valuable use, or it may be destructive and death-dealing. So far your quarrels have been consistently harmful. Let's figure out some way to make every quarrel profitable."

This was a new idea to him—and to her as well, for Mary came down eagerly next day. She did not want the marriage to break up. She was just a well-meaning, badly spoiled child—like her husband. By this time both were scared, and ready to make a real effort to improve their situation, if they only knew what to do. So we gave them four rules to follow:

1. *Limit each quarrel.*

Too often a quarrel, starting over nothing at all, spreads until it takes in all the past, present, and future of each participant, of the participant's family, friends, acquaintances, and business associates. In this way it is like a fire which gets out of hand. Originally intended as a small flame to boil the pot, it becomes a conflagration which destroys the house.

The way to limit the quarrel, of course, is to focus it down on the original issue instead of letting it degenerate into a Donnybrook Fair. It is not easy for two combatants to do this; but we were lucky in having Larry and Mary strike an issue on the first day of their New Deal, which they managed successfully.

It started at the breakfast table when Larry mentioned that he

would have to stay downtown that evening and make up some work at the office. Naturally, his work had suffered during these domestic conflicts; he was behind in his reports. But Mary immediately challenged him:

"It seems to me it would be more helpful to our marriage if you'd invite me out to dinner and then take me to a show somewhere!"

Within seven minutes, the issue was no longer the state of Larry's records at the office; it had been broadened to include (a) Mary's alleged mismanagement of the household finances, (b) Mary's indignation, every time she thought of it, over a date with her which Larry broke on the day after they became engaged, (c) the fact that, after 30 years in the shoe business, Mary's father had not risen at the time of his death to be anything more than a salesman, (d) the fact that Larry graduated from college \$700 in debt, and so on down to (z) inclusive!

Somewhere along about (t), (u), or (v), the light broke on them almost simultaneously, and they began to laugh. That saved the day for once. They went back to Larry's neglected sales reports and agreed that he would finish these tonight, because tomorrow was the first of the month; and that tomorrow night he and Mary would celebrate with a trip to Chinatown.

2. *Limit yourself, too.*

If you are in a fight, you instinctively look around for a weapon; and if you find a convenient weapon which will inflict a dangerous wound, it looks like a lifesaver to you. A quarrel can be managed successfully, only when husband and wife deliberately exercise enough self-control to avoid saying anything of which they will be ashamed the next day.

Of course this, like the preceding rule, constitutes a counsel of perfection; yet it is sometimes surprising how quickly one can form habits, either of blackguarding the adversary or of conducting even a heated discussion with courtesy and good temper. Larry and Mary fell from grace often enough in this respect, but as they practiced keeping the quarrel focused down on the original point, so they also practiced restraint in their tendency to abuse and browbeat each other; and month by month their altercations became more civilized.

3. *Reach some decision.*

The trouble with many quarrels is that they end nowhere. They keep on smouldering when they are not burning fiercely. Nothing is to be gained by continuous debate and filibustering in family councils. As quickly as the issue is delimited it should be made the basis, not merely for a decision of some sort, but for a decision that is broad enough to serve as a guide in the future, thereby eliminating the need for coming back to that point in future altercations.

Mary's visits to her mother, and Larry's invitations to his parents, had been sore spots ever since the home was unlocked on the return from the Florida honeymoon. With our help, husband and wife now worked out a systematic program to deal with these issues; and Mary was smart enough to suggest tying into it still another issue that had been a prolific source of conflict—Larry's weekly evening at the lodge. There was a Woman's Auxiliary which she could have attended, but she did not care to do so. He resented her refusal to associate with the wives of other lodge members; she resented his leaving her alone one night every week. They now agreed that she would take his lodge night to visit her mother; and that they would try to have her mother and his parents over for dinner together at least once a fortnight. The elders got along very well together, and might always have been invited in that way; but in the past Larry had been more interested in trying to get preferential treatment for his parents, while Mary had unconsciously used her mother as a club to belabor Larry.

4. *Take immediate action on the decision.*

Once an agreement is made, it should be carried out with no delay. It becomes valuable as it is put into effect. One of the important parts of our job was to see that Mary and Larry ended with action, not merely with discussion.

It is hardly necessary to say that this took time. At first we saw one or the other every day. Then we put them on a once-a-week schedule. Even after a year, they were still reporting in each month. This had the advantage of making them review their own progress, and it gave them an opportunity to see that it *was* progress, in spite of the occasional failures.

Thus, by practical application, the four principles above-mentioned gradually transformed the character of the quarrels in this home. Of course, there was need for a great deal more re-education

at the same time. We helped them to recognize that the primary purpose of marriage is the success of a pair, not the self-assertion of an individual. We helped Mary get more opportunity for self-expression outside the home through the study of interior decoration, through the neighborhood woman's club, and through teaching a Sunday School class. We helped the two to work out a more adequate recreational program which would give them something to think about and talk about. We helped them to reduce opportunities for conflict by adopting a budget. We helped them to understand better the psychological differences between man and woman.

But this reorientation of their marriage was made possible largely by the adoption of a definite technique in their quarrels. Each of them wrote out the four rules and kept them in sight for ready reference. Little by little, they found that the quarrels became so changed in character that they were no longer quarrels. They were simply a technique for making adjustments and avoiding conflict.

## IS YOUR VOICE FOR WAR OR PEACE IN THE HOME?

1. When your husband has apologized, abjectly and profusely, for the way he played the king of clubs at the bridge party last night, you let the matter drop *permanently*.
2. You would rather associate with the Smiths, who are poor but happily married, than with the Joneses, who are rich but continually quarreling with each other in public.
3. If your husband declines to go with you to a symphony concert, you do not attack him again on it until you have figured out an entirely different line of approach.
4. If a traffic cop bawls you out for driving through a stop light, you wait calmly until he finishes and then state your case without any show of feeling.
5. When your mother-in-law begins to open your cupboards and pull out your bureau drawers, you feel that it shows merely a natural interest on her part.



6. You are not bothered by the fact that some of your closest friends are radical New Dealers, others conservative Republicans.
7. If it appears that your husband is showing a great deal of interest in a redheaded divorcee at the party, you always give him credit for good intentions.
8. When some other driver cuts in ahead of you and then slows down, you are not irritated.
9. At luncheon with your best friends, you never mention that your husband failed to phone you that he was going to be an hour late for dinner last night.
10. You are willing to change your mind about "Union Now" after your husband has set forth facts which you had previously overlooked.

To meet all of these requirements would be expecting a good deal of any human being. If most of the foregoing statements apply to you, however, it indicates that you have the type of disposition which will enable you to live in peace in your own home—or anywhere else.

## 9

### *Don't Laugh at Your Wife*

RUTH is overweight—no doubt about that. Fred always gets a laugh out of his wife's figure.

"When are you going to put in that tennis court?" he asks a neighbor. "Let me know when you're ready to roll it, and I'll lend you Ruth. Just put her in a sack and you'll have the best roller in town."

Everybody laughs—except Ruth. "Come on, funny face," she retorts. "You're getting soup all over your clothes. I'll have to bring an oilcloth bib for you next time we come to the Johnsons for dinner." She turns to Mr. Johnson: "I'm going to pick out for my next husband a man who has better table manners."

"Your next *husbands*, you mean, don't you?" Fred pursues. "If you had three of them, each could have 125 pounds of wife, which is all any one man wants."

And so they continue to stab each other indefinitely with pretended jokes, the only real purpose of which is to hurt—and to hurt badly. They are barbed, and the barbs are poisoned.

A large number of husbands and wives pick at each other in this way. Few habits are more dangerous to marriage.

Such a pretense of humor is one of the commonest ways in which husband and wife express their hostility toward each other. Why do they feel such hostility? Because they have never grown up. They are still children, unable to live in a cooperative partnership because they lack confidence in themselves, must always be asserting themselves, trying to get their own way like spoiled children, and deriving satisfaction from senseless squabbling because

they thereby make themselves for the moment the center of the stage.

Many a marriage owes its breakup to the establishment of such a warped and twisted pattern of make-believe fun. To deal with the problem, one must naturally go back of the slurs and sneers to the underlying reason for them—the real cause of the hostility that is being expressed in this petty and hurtful way.

"The cause is plain enough," Fred expostulates. "It's Ruth's figure—if you call zero a figure. I'm just trying to get her to reduce."

"I doubt it," I answered. "Her figure is just the excuse for this treatment. If she were slender, then you'd pick on her because she can't dance as well as you do. If she lisped, you'd jump on her for that. If she had a birthmark, you'd always be reminding her of it. But let's assume that you are primarily concerned with the fact that she has become one of the stylish stouts. If you had a boy who was too fat, would you feel that the only effective treatment was continually to torment and humiliate him in public?"

Fred looked a bit uncomfortable but replied, "She could eat less, if she wanted to."

"No doubt. Why, then, does she eat too much, with this unfortunate result? Assuming that it is not wholly a mere medical problem, I suspect that her gluttony has a psychological explanation. It's partly an attempt to find satisfactions and enjoyments in life that will take the place of those she should be finding in marriage but is not now finding there. Thus the real cause of her overeating is the same as the real cause of your misplaced attempt at wit—namely, that there is something the matter with *you!* You can at least stop this incessant ridicule."

But Fred was ready with an answer. "All the books tell of the danger of *repressing* feelings of hostility, of refusing to recognize and accept them," he asserted. "Surely you'll admit that every psychiatrist points out the need to face these tendencies frankly—not to deny them to yourself?"

That requires a little further analysis. There are three points to be considered.

1. It is true that children are allowed, within limits, to express their hostility, but this is part of the general process of growing up. The psychoanalyst, dealing with a little boy, allows him to ex-

press as much hostility as he likes because the boy thereby finds that "it doesn't get him anywhere"; that it provokes no reaction. Seeing that it is neither necessary nor useful to him, he therefore tends to give up such behavior. But Fred has gone beyond the age at which he can afford to try to solve his problems in this manner, or to refuse to attempt to solve them and merely fall back on ridicule as a substitute.

2. It is desirable for Fred to recognize and admit to himself these childish traits, but he should not stop there. Many a person not merely recognizes but, one might say, boasts of childish behavior as an attempted justification for remaining at a childish level when he ought to be an adult.

"I'm just a baby when it comes to being hurt," Mr. G. advertises.

"Don't expect me to know—I'm too dumb," Miss J. warns.

"If anybody does that to me, I bawl 'em out good and plenty," Mrs. O. declares. "I have an absolutely ungovernable temper."

All of these persons find it easier to behave like babies than like grownups. They don't want to change.

3. After you recognize these hostile tendencies of which we are speaking, the first thing to do is to act on that knowledge. Stop hounding your wife by being supposedly facetious at her expense, and begin to encourage her a little by word and example.

"But, Dr. Popenoe, that will just encourage her to stay fat," Fred expostulates. "If I seemed to be perfectly satisfied, she'd have no reason to change."

"Is your sarcasm leading her to change?"

"Not yet—that's just what I'm kicking about."

"Then it's time to try a new tack. Instead of bedeviling her all the time, stop all jokes at her expense or at the expense of marriage, and begin to act like an adult. It is perfectly clear by this time that you're not picking at her merely because she's overweight. You're picking at her because she's your wife. Neither one of you, right now, is able to live satisfactorily in an adult relationship such as marriage. You're back at the level of what psychologists sometimes call 'sand-pile squabbling'—a couple of little children snapping at each other all the time, each wanting whatever the other has, neither having developed to the point of understanding teamwork and cooperation. Unfortunately a great many marriages

are at that level. That's one reason why the divorce rate is so high.

"An adult relationship—marriage, or any other—requires you to accept the fact of human differences, to allow other people to live their own lives, to. . . ."

"But, Dr. Popenoe, two people in marriage can't live their own lives. The two become one."

"Which one?—as the old gag has it."

"Why, a little of each, I suppose."

"Good. Then you'll have to begin to cultivate the "*we*-psychology"; to think of yourself in terms of a pair, rather than as an individual who must put the other in her place by ridiculing her before her friends and relatives whenever you get a chance. You can do a lot of laughing *in* marriage, but don't you dare to laugh *at* marriage.

"Ruth may feel just as much hostility toward you as you do toward her. It may be that her overweight is, in part, a sort of backhanded way of punishing you. It's an expensive and unsatisfactory way, but quarrels are like that.

"But actually," I continued, "you don't want to break up this marriage, and it's unlikely that either of you could do better, or even as well, in a second marriage."

"Why no, we've never even thought of splitting up. You're taking my little jokes too seriously."

"Plenty of experience shows," I retorted, "that these 'little jokes' are one of the most effective ways to break up a marriage. Suppose you quit joking and begin to take marriage seriously."

Then we worked out a program along these lines:

1. Recognize frankly your present feelings of hostility. There would certainly be no advantage in trying to cover them up, in denying them to yourself, in pretending a lie.
2. But if you recognize and accept them in this way, you are thereby largely freed from any necessity to express them in meanesses. You can simply laugh at them to yourself, while starting to remove them.
3. Work on the "*we*-psychology" all the time. Begin to give up, consciously, your feelings of separateness. Don't try to identify yourself with your wife, of course; but try consistently to identify

yourself with your marriage. Think of yourself always as a pair, not as an individual.

4. For the present, don't worry about your wife's failure to do the same thing. Give up denouncing or even preaching. Set her a good example. Give positive, not negative, suggestions. If you keep before her the idea that she is a good wife, she will be much more likely to try to be a good wife. After all, her *avoids* (or any other handicap, for the principle is a general one: overweight in Ruth's case but any one of a hundred other things for any other wife or any husband) is much more distressing and humiliating to her than it is to her husband. If she has not gotten rid of it, there must be some reason. The reason in this case, as I have already said, is probably double: on the one hand it's a way of punishing her husband, of "getting even" with him; on the other hand, it is an attempt to find some satisfactions in life, even if harmful ones. If she discovers that she no longer has to fight her husband, her first reason will be removed. If she begins to get some greater satisfactions out of marriage, the second reason will be removed. Overweight, in this marriage, is merely a symptom of something that is wrong, farther back.

5. As you begin to identify yourself more with marriage, and do a little more teamwork, you'll be able to turn *outward* whatever feelings of hostility you still retain. Find an object for them outside the marriage. Go after something that is wrong in your community or in the world at large, and try to improve it.

6. Finally, and all the time, be improving the foundations of your marriage. Examine all of them to see which ones need strengthening. Is it the sexual adjustment? The problem of handling the family finances in a fair and democratic way? The need of more normal social and recreational life for husband and wife? Interference of in-laws? Disagreement about the disciplining of the children? It may be any or all of these or a dozen other things. Build up a strong foundation, and keep it strong.

Next time you are in a group of intimate friends, note how many of the husbands and wives are showing their hostility by ridiculing each other. It's too common a fault, and it's likely to end by becoming a fatal fault. All too easily it becomes a habit. It must be

treated like any other bad habit. But back of that lie deep-seated and complicated causes. Deal with the causes, too. Make up your mind that under no conditions will you yourself form the habit of attacking your partner through ridicule, and permit yourself no exceptions.

# 10

## *"I Married a Stingy Man"*

Mrs. C. is tired of saving money for old age. "I think we ought to live a little bit right now," she asserts. "My husband is making good money but he pinches every penny, doles it out as if it were rationed by the government, and is always reminding me that we have to provide for the future. The trouble is, the future never comes. As far as I can see, we're just saving for the benefit of our grandchildren. Don't you think there is a present in life, as well as a future?"

Contrary to what is often asserted, lack of finances is not a serious factor in breaking up marriages. If you stop to think of it, you'll realize that no happily married couple ever went into the divorce court merely because the husband lost his job or took a heavy cut in salary. Various studies have confirmed this everyday observation and have proved that there is no relationship between amount of income and happiness, either in marriage or out.

It is not the amount of income, but the agreement on how that amount should be handled, that is significant in marital happiness. In spite of the fact that most of us have had very little training for the job, we succeed in handling the family income without too much difference of opinion. Data collected from hundreds of families by the American Institute of Family Relations revealed that only 3 per cent of the husbands and 5 per cent of the wives claimed to "frequently disagree" on this point. But where disagreement does exist, it is likely to become more and more prominent. In short, quarrels over finances rarely make a good marriage bad, but they often make a bad marriage worse.



It may be either the husband or the wife who is unreasonable on this point, but since the husband usually gets his hands on the income first, he is in a position to make trouble if he wants to do so. The causes are varied. Mr. L. had been brought up in poverty; he had formed habits that he called thrifty and which led others to describe him summarily as a tightwad. Saving money had become an obsession with him. His wife apologized for him: "He was brought up that way." Another man brought up in the same way might have reacted in just the opposite manner when he finally became well to do; he might have become a spendthrift or a show-off who always insisted on paying the check for the whole crowd, who dressed expensively and drove the largest automobile he could buy, in order to make the world, and himself, forget his early poverty.

Dr. McT. was not brought up in poverty; his parents were "well fixed"; but they had carried to an extreme the so-called Puritanical tradition of overemphasis on thrift and savings, with a strong conviction of the sinfulness of display, waste, or even unnecessary pleasure. They took their pleasure in self-denial, self-martyrization. Dr. McT. as a boy learned that it was an unworthy extravagance to take a street car if he could possibly walk, and taking a taxi was almost wicked. There was no excuse for a telegram if an air-mail letter would do; but even the six-cent stamp on that letter was open to question—perhaps a penny postcard would have met the need. He, too, was "brought up that way."

Mr. C., whose wife complained of him in the first paragraph, represented a more objectionable type—the husband who is using his control of the family finances as a club to beat his wife into subjection. He was aggressive, critical, and self-centered; determined to be the boss and to keep his wife in her place. Finding fault with his wife, pointing out her extravagance, denouncing her wastefulness, were mainly methods of making himself feel important.

All of these and other reasons for penuriousness on the part of the husband (or wife) may be found together, and they may be made worse by meddling from the relatives on either side. Mrs. W. would get along pretty well if her mother and sister were not continually goading her into revolt by telling her, "You're entitled to

get something out of life, Mary. You don't have to go around looking like an orphan. Jim can afford to have you dress well; it will reflect credit on him. You go downtown and get what you ought to have, and just charge it to him. He can't refuse to pay his bills." On the other hand Mr. Y.'s mother is the real problem in his home. She drops in at any time, looks in all the closets and cupboards, pulls open every drawer in sight, and then gets her son off in a corner: "Jamie, I don't want to say a word against Maryanne—she's a very sweet girl; but after all I don't suppose she has had much experience as a homemaker, and I wonder if you realize how much money she could save if she," etc., etc.

If the husband's penuriousness is largely a method of dominating or punishing his wife, she naturally resents both the domination and the unfairness of the method used. If it results in cutting down the current budget unduly in order to provide for old age, as Mrs. C. believed it did, then there are likely to be many injurious effects. The children may not get the opportunities they need; at any rate the wife often feels that they are being deprived. Necessary elements may be omitted from the diet. The allowance for clothing may be reduced unwisely, in order to keep up appearances in other ways. The wife is likely to be the main sufferer. Contrary to the jokesmiths, a wife's expenditure on clothes is not a common cause of family bankruptcy; actually, the average man probably spends more on his clothes than his wife does on hers. Studies also show that, as she grows older, the average wife spends proportionately less and less on her clothing. If there are daughters, their wardrobes increase in cost, especially as they come into the high school and college ages, and mother often tries to offset this expenditure, which she feels is absolutely necessary, by making over her own dresses and getting only one new hat a year. She does this willingly, if she feels that it is necessary; resentfully, if she feels that it is unnecessary and merely the outgrowth of her husband's stinginess.

Surveys show, however, that recreation is likely to be the first item in the budget to feel the ax, when retrenchment is required. This is sometimes a good thing for all concerned. Many a family was strengthened during the last great Depression by having to give up extravagant and centrifugal activities; by being together

more and developing interests in the home and back yard to take the place of night clubs. In such cases husband and wife agreed that the retrenchment was necessary, and were united in carrying it out. But in normal times, the normal family cannot afford to do without a normal amount of recreation, and it must plan accordingly for wholesome, constructive, mutually shared activities that give the members something to talk about, build up interests in common, and break the monotony of life.

Wives react in many other perfectly natural ways to the stinginess of their husbands. The wife may feel a lack of recognition or appreciation of what she is doing to create a good home. She may develop a very justifiable antagonism toward her in-laws. She may have a feeling of insecurity, especially if her husband balances his penuriousness in the home by gambling, drinking, or wasting money in other ways. Finally, the husband's own personality deteriorates, as one always suffers from indulging childish traits and doing injustice to others. It becomes easier and easier for him to justify himself by rationalizing that his wife is incompetent, disloyal, stupid, hostile to his relatives, or takes sides with the children against their own father. The home may break up; quarrels over finances may seem to be the cause, but the real cause obviously is the husband's own spoiled-child personality.

What is to be done about it?

Prevention is naturally desirable, and parents should start by giving the child a small allowance almost as soon as he can count and make change. The idea that he should not get an allowance "until he can understand the value of money" is fallacious; he'll never understand the value of money until he has some to spend, makes a few mistakes, and gradually discovers that he cannot get what he wants except by saving and planning.

At least by adolescence, the youngster should not only be handling most of his own finances but some of those of the family; he should be doing some of the purchasing and taking part in family councils which will help to provide young people with adult patterns. Consumer education is particularly important in connection with the family's actual, day-by-day experience.

When it comes to marriage, the subject must be discussed fully and frankly in advance. One of my friends, a minister who marries

many young people from the university and who makes it a point to talk over their prospects with them rather extensively before the ceremony, was astounded to discover that one fourth of the girls did not know what the fiance's income was. They had no idea what they would have to work with after marriage, much less *how* they would work with it. "Love would find a way."

If they had no interest in the bridegroom's income, one would suppose that their mothers might have had some curiosity on the subject and that the facts would thus have come to light. Such ignorance is part of the present overromantic attitude toward marriage—that "romantic infantilism" which psychologists continually denounce and which fiction, radio, and motion picture no less continually and very persuasively endorse. There is no statistical support for the ancient adage that "When poverty comes in at the door, love flies out of the window." But anything that really deserves the name of love, in marriage, will be based on concern for the welfare of the other, rather than on a small boy's self-assertion and desire to "show off."

Whether it is adopted before or after marriage, every couple should have a budget, but as Dr. M. C. Elmer remarked, "Most budgets begin with the least important items and never get to the important things of family life." It is desirable to decide what proportion of the family income should go for rent; such items are much less significant than a decision as to family interests, and the amount of time available for those interests. Begin with these in any case; it is particularly necessary to begin with them if you have a stingy husband, because only by an approach from that side are you likely to avoid unlimited argument and get some cooperation from him.

Suppose we recall Mrs. C., whom I introduced in the first paragraph and who has dropped in several times since. I'll ask her to step back into the picture once more and tell us in detail how she worked out the problem that confronted her.

"First, I started to budget the family interests," she relates. "I suggested to David that we ought to take stock of ourselves and make sure that we had plenty of things to keep us busy. He was suspicious, but since the idea apparently did not involve any money, he fell in with it one evening when we were all at home

and a good golf score had put him in an expansive mood. Our family council turned out an interest-inventory something like this:

DAVID: 'Business, golf, church, American Legion.'

MOLLY: 'Church, Legion Auxiliary.'

JUNIOR: 'High school weekly paper, tennis, Boy Scouts.'

MARY JO: 'Camp Fire Girls, Sunday School.'

"It didn't make a very imposing list, and we began to fill out with trivialities; but I think we all recognized that we, as a family, needed more interests, especially those that brought us together, gave us something to discuss at the dinner table. Recognition of that fact did us a lot of good—but that's a little off the present subject.

"Then a few weeks later, after we had all been thinking about it, I suggested that we ought to budget (David adores that word, although he always refused to make a household budget because he said he had it in his head)—that we ought to budget our time in the light of our family interests, to see whether we couldn't get more out of life every 24 hours. As a matter of fact we carried the discussion of this point over several months, because all the members of the family found it interesting. We agreed that there were two fundamental principles. If we were to be a strong, well-organized family, we must have enough interests in common; but we must also expect to have a good many interests that weren't in common. We thought we'd get along well together as a group, to the extent that each one had a lot of individual activities which kept him busy and happy. Then he wouldn't be bored or grouchy or irritable and take it out on the others. David thought this was a fine scheme for the children—and it was; but he also applied it to himself by joining a service club.

"We budgeted our time roughly on the basis of getting all the family needs met in this way. I pointed out that time was the most important item of all, since it couldn't be replaced, and that it was out of the question to permit any waste of it. A high standard of living was exemplified much more by the companionship and happiness within the family than it was in having a two-car garage and a lot of overstuffed furniture in the living room; and

this companionship was possible only if we used our time to the very best advantage possible.

"So we budgeted two things: interests and time. The next was money—the sore spot in David's mind. I began to comment that the money was much less important than time and interests; any family could get along with less money if it budgeted interests and time intelligently. That idea appealed to him, and I then suggested (all this was spread over many months, because David isn't a man whom you can crowd into quick action) that maybe we weren't teaching the children to handle money in ways that would enable them to get the most out of life with the least cash investment. We joined an organization that sends out monthly bulletins to consumers, telling them what the best buys are, and David was impressed when Junior pointed out that we had saved the year's membership fee in the first two weeks of buying on the new plan. By this time both of the children had become very much interested in the whole idea of a planned economy for the C. family.

"They then proposed that they take over the ordinary buying for the family, and be allowed to put into Government bonds all they could save for us over the previous rate of expenditures. This put their father in a corner, because he couldn't show what the previous rate of expenditure was; he had always refused to make regular provision for the purpose, but had simply doled out the money, five dollars today, ten dollars next week, when I begged for it. When the discussion reached that point he was a bit uncomfortable, so I saved his face by suggesting that the children go to the bank, which I knew had a budget service for the public, and find out what would be the usual rate of expenditure for a family of our size. We would then show how easily we 'could beat par for the course.'

"This brought us down to the real problems—*my* real problems with my husband; and I was skating on thin ice, because we couldn't ask the bank for a budget without telling the amount of income on which it was to be based, and David had always kept the amount of our income a secret—in fact to this day I don't know how much he is making, although I'm sure it varies a good deal from year to year because of the nature of his business. He

was mighty uncomfortable—I could see that with one eye open—but finally he told the children they might ask for average percentages of expenditure for household purposes based on an average income of \$4,000 a year. I'll bet he makes twice that in most years! However, it was a start.

"Junior and Mary Jo came back with the customary story: 25 per cent for rent, 5 per cent for health, and so on—I don't need to bother you with those details. They were getting a liberal education from all this, however. Their figures for the first month showed we were spending so much less than the hypothetical 'average family' under some of the headings that David really blushed. After all, he has a lot of decent instincts—even if I have occasionally felt like putting ground glass in his oatmeal!

"The budgeting of interests and of time was kept to the front and tied in with all these details. It was agreed that there should be a division of responsibility; that we should talk over things that were *joint* responsibility, but not others. It turned out that there were not many matters of joint responsibility, apart from questions of broad policy of new capital expenditures, such as house furnishings. But if one of us was going to have responsibility for certain expenditures, it was necessary to know how much money was available for the purpose, and this gradually led to the allotment of funds for definite purposes, which Mr. C. had always resisted in the past, insisting that 'we'll just buy whatever we need whenever we need it.' He came now to see that it was a time-saving and moneysaving policy, that the children were getting a wonderful education out of it; and we made him feel that he was a very progressive and forward-looking business man in the management of his own home as he was in the management of his business.

"When it came to allotment for clothes, we showed that we had been spending only about 40 per cent as much as the budget service suggested. I think David felt a little bit guilty on that point too! Anyhow, I finally got a regular allowance for clothing, which I had wanted—in vain—from the day of my marriage.

"I had always felt that I had a right—that every woman has a right—to a personal allowance to be spent without accounting. Like lots of other wives, I had always had to chisel a few dollars

## "I Married a Stingy Man"

out of the food money, if I wanted to do something special. It wasn't fair! We finally got the matter of personal allowances settled when Mary Jo went into the second year of high school; she got one, and I got one too. I felt that that was the real climax of a campaign that had lasted for more than two years!

"Well, that's the story," Mrs. C. concluded. "I married a stingy husband and wasn't able to do anything about it for almost 15 years. Arguments, pleadings, tears, were utterly useless; I think they made him feel secretly better pleased with himself because they were evidences of his power. When I finally took it up as a campaign of re-education, with the help of the children, I succeeded by using unlimited patience, by making him see that it was all to his own advantage, and by putting it on the basis of family solidarity through emphasis on the interests of the various members, and the time available to cultivate those interests, as well as on the dollars and cents. Money is not significant for itself but for its relation to the use of time.

"As a matter of fact, the whole business turned out to be the greatest interest in common that the family ever had. When the children came home reporting that they had found a place where they could buy canned tomatoes of better quality than we had been using, for six cents a can less, you'd have thought that a major victory had been reported from some battle front.

"I never got my husband to the point of a joint bank account, which the largest number of successful and well-educated families seem to use. But I was willing to waive that. He's still stingy but he has to find an outlet for that in his business: 'Let the buyer beware!' If he's stingy, he's also rigorously honest; he has always had the reputation of being fair and just in his business; and we finally educated him into being fair and just in his own home."

Mrs. C.'s methods would not work with every husband. The first thing to do is to determine *why* he is stingy, then to proceed on that knowledge. Probably some are incurable. But the situation can be improved in a good many families if the wife will substitute education for emotion, if she will take one step at a time, and if she will make certain that the removal of each evil is accomplished by putting something better in its place.



*Don't Hide behind Indecision*

MR. W. is emphatic about it.

"Absolutely," he declares, "my wife is the no-decision champion of the world. If you can think of any sort of a situation in which she'll really be forced to make a decision, I'll buy you a good cigar—or two bad ones, whichever you prefer.

"Take last night, for instance. It was hot, so I asked her if she wouldn't like to save trouble by going out for dinner.

"She could say 'Yes' or 'No.' I mean anybody else could. But not Marie." And he continued to dramatize a long conversation along these general lines:

MR. W.: "Well, do you want to go, or don't you?"

MRS. W.: "Would you like to?"

MR. W.: "I'm inviting you."

MRS. W.: "If you want to go, that's all right with me."

MR. W.: "Now look here . . . oh, well, O.K., where would you like to go?"

MRS. W.: "Why, anywhere you like."

MR. W.: "I'm inviting you out—you can at least express some preference. We'll go anywhere you say."

MRS. W.: "Oh, no—you decide."

As he repeated the conversation he became so indignant that I interrupted him: "Why not just make a decision? If she's so obliging that she wants to leave it all to you, I should think you could easily suit yourself."

"Maybe I could suit myself," Mr. W. replied sarcastically, "but that's a long way from suiting her. She refuses to make any deci-

sion, in order to be free to criticize the decision I make. Whatever I choose, it turns out to be wrong, and she then denounces it and blames me for it.

"Maybe it sounds like a trivial matter, but it becomes maddening. Marie is a fine woman in most respects; but why on earth does she always refuse to make even the most trifling decision? I know, of course, since I've already answered my own question: she forces every decision on me, so she will have no responsibility for the decision and therefore be able to criticize it—as she always does! But what's the matter with her?"

Marie's habit is a common one, by which weakness attempts to conquer strength. Throughout the ages, woman, as the physically weaker partner, has been finding ways in which she could hold her own with her husband, even get the best of him occasionally, without letting the argument be settled by brute strength, in which she would always lose. Marie's plan is a typical feminine device. Once in a while one encounters a husband who is using it; he is likely to be a weak specimen married to a dominant woman. But determination to make the partner accept all responsibilities is essentially "woman's way."

Actually, the day when arguments could be settled by the knock-down-and-drag-out technique has passed. Though weaker physically, woman is now a copartner, not a dependent. Why does she cling to this technique long after the decisive value of mere physical strength has vanished?

Various women come to mind who exemplify various reasons. There was Mrs. N., who really did not believe in sex equality. Like a lot of other women, she grew up claiming that women are not inferior, but really thinking and acting as if they are. She "didn't know her own strength," and required some re-education before she could be a real partner, not a mere sparring partner who was always sparring for points.

Mrs. E., another wife who always refused on principle to make up her mind, had been held down by an overdominant mother. Some girls have that experience and bounce back and become overdominant and overaggressive themselves when they get away from maternal management. But Mrs. E.'s spirit had been broken. She always expected other people to boss her, and covered herself by

these defensive tactics—which are, incidentally, a favorite protective device of officeholders and bureaucrats.

Mrs. Y. was nothing more than a lazy parasite. Her friends called her childish, but this was an injustice to childhood. The unspoiled child is usually a dynamo of energy, determined to do things for himself. If he is too much waited on and spoiled, he may become a lazy parasite. That was how Mrs. Y. got her start.

All of them, like Marie W., had formed the habit, annoying and sometimes infuriating to their husbands, of refusing to make up their minds, of insisting that the husband make all the mistakes—for any choice that he made, under this system, mysteriously turned out to be a mistake. What can be done for them?

In the first place the husband should make sure that he isn't working that side of the street himself. Occasionally it turns out that he is really trying to force his wife to make the decisions for him. He should not expect too much; and he should remember that, statistically speaking, women are more emotional, more introverted, more neurotic, and have more feelings of inferiority than do men, and that he may therefore need a bit of patience and understanding to deal with *any* woman. Perhaps he might, incidentally, be glad that he didn't get a wife who insists on making *all* the decisions.

Then, if she is neurotic, her husband may help her to redefine her purpose in life. The neurotic is always trying to hide something. What is she trying to hide? She ought to drag it out and face it. This might be done more easily with the help of a psychologist; but in the long run a sound society cannot be built on psychologists and psychiatrists, any more than normal parenthood can depend on pediatricians or than conjugal happiness can exist only through the aid of marital counselors. People must be taught that they can work out their own salvation by being willing to study the subject and make the effort—the very attitude that our hypothetical client here is trying to avoid. Such an attitude of avoidance may become a hindrance to success in all activities of life.

Mr. W. tried a number of expedients. One was to plan further in advance. "It seems to me part of the trouble is Marie's dislike for snap judgments," he reported. "I've just phoned her that we're

going out for dinner tonight, and that I'll know where she wants to go, by the dress she's wearing when I get home."

It transpired later, of course, that Marie had trumped that particular ace by not being dressed when he got home. But it was a good idea, anyhow. He varied it by suggesting two or three alternatives, with the proposal that they toss up or draw lots to decide. If it really made no difference where they went or what they did—as Marie was likely to assert—a decision based on chance was good enough.

But did it really make no difference? That was one of the points which Mr. W., an advertising man, developed with great satisfaction to himself. In choosing a restaurant or a movie, tossing a penny might do; but in choosing a new rug or deciding what flowers to plant along the walk, the decision might well be made on the basis of facts. Mr. W. therefore undertook an educational campaign with his wife, laying out the facts for and against various possibilities, and reaching a decision by a process of elimination.

Mr. G., with whom he discussed his problem at the club, did not approve of such tactics. "That's all foolishness," he asserted. "I got tired of my wife's always side-stepping, so I laid down the law that we'd take turns; and that each would be a good sport, if the other's decision was unsatisfactory. When my wife began to hedge even on that, I had her write down her choice; then it was settled once and for all."

"We worked it out a little differently," Mr. S. put in. "We hold a family council. On the principle of 'ladies first,' my wife is required to give her opinion, then each of the children expresses an opinion, and finally I do the same. My wife's judgment is usually better than that of the children and comparing herself with them is helping her, it seems to me, to acquire more confidence in her own judgment."

Any husband can try some of these schemes for himself, but Mr. S. has brought out one important point: the general principle is that the wife must have experience in enjoying success. Because she does not believe she will have success in making choices, she has taken a substitute goal—the enjoyment of success in criticizing her husband's choices. She must come gradually to see that it is more fun to live in her own right.

No wife should wait for her husband to reform her, in this respect, however; she should take pride in standing on her own feet. Mrs. V., who came for help in straightening out a marital snarl, worked successfully on this problem after her husband had called it to her attention, more forcibly than politely. "There's no one way to do it," she summarized. "I tried half a dozen different things, each of which helped a little."

1. She started by keeping tab on herself, to find out how many of the joint decisions in the home were really her husband's. "After a few weeks," she reported, "I had to admit that my husband was making 90 per cent of the decisions. I wasn't doing my share—I had just formed the habit of passing the buck."

2. Then she tried to analyze the reasons for this habit. "Probably there are a lot that I missed," she recounted, "but I think it is partly because my father was a strong character; he ran things in our home; and I grew up with the idea that any good husband would do the same. Then I was really very anxious to make my marriage a success—even if I did go about it the wrong way a good deal of the time!—and I wanted my husband to do what he would enjoy. I overdid it!"

3. "Then I began to note whether I shirked responsibility only with reference to my husband. Did I make all other decisions promptly; or was my shilly-shallying attitude in dealing with my husband, only a part of a general pattern of life? I decided it was a little of each."

This is an extremely important point which every wife might well investigate—for it is a good thing for all married partners to take stock of themselves occasionally. If the wife has no trouble in reaching conclusions at her club, or in the department store, but finds herself unable to settle on anything which involves her husband, she may be trying to punish him, or may be afraid of him, or may be afraid of *all* men; or may be paralyzed by fear of her own inadequacy as a *wife*, although she feels reasonably sure of herself in other respects. On the other hand it may be part of a feeling of *total* inadequacy—merely part of a wrong "style of life," as Alfred Adler put it. Many women will probably decide, like Mrs. V., that it is "a little of each."

4. "After that," Mrs. V. continued, "I began to time myself.

I believe that's the way efficiency experts help people to become better bricklayers, and so on, isn't it? I used to spend a lot of time trying to decide such trivial questions as to what we should have for dinner." Almost any morning in the V. household, she went on, one might hear a conversation following this basic pattern:

SHE: "What would you like for dinner tonight, darling?"

HE: [*promptly*] "A cheese soufflé and some fried potatoes."

SHE: "Oh, you don't want that, do you?"

HE: [*decisively*] "Certainly I do; otherwise I wouldn't have said so."

SHE: "Wouldn't you rather have some tuna, and a cottage cheese salad with Roquefort dressing?"

HE: "I wouldn't *rather* have that, but if you'd rather give it to me, it's O.K."

SHE: "But darling, I only asked you because I want to give you what you'll enjoy most."

HE: "All right, then, a cheese soufflé."

SHE: "But we had cheese soufflé just a week or two ago."

HE: "You can't have it too often to suit me."

SHE: "Would you care for chicken, if I can get any?"

HE: "Anything will suit me."

SHE: "I wish you'd tell me what you would really like!"

HE: "Great Scott!—didn't you hear when I mentioned cheese soufflé?"

SHE: "Now don't get angry, dear, when I'm only trying to please you!"

And so on until he announces that he has to run for the bus and that she can do anything she likes. She debates the matter with herself all day and compromises by serving fillet of sole.

"What's the matter with me, Dr. Popenoe?" she ended. "It just sounds too silly for words."

I admitted that men sometimes thought so, too—that it was, in fact, a comment made by many husbands many times.

"Oh, I am glad to hear you say that," she exclaimed. "It makes me feel better to know that I'm not the only wife who does that sort of thing. What can I do to stop it?"

Following up her previous suggestions about efficiency experts, I advised that she try a stop watch on herself. If it took her most

of the day to decide what to have for dinner, after her husband had told her what he wanted, she might reduce that by practice. She found the idea interesting and reported from time to time that she was using an alarm clock in order to give herself a limit—she would make up her mind before the bell rang. Finally she came in with "Eureka!"

"I've cut the time to zero," she announced proudly. "I just gave him what he asked for!"

"What did he say?"

"Not a word—but he certainly looked astonished"; and she laughed at herself in a thoroughly healthful way.

One by one, she identified other choices on which she was losing time, and improved her speed.

5. Then she picked out some card games that called for quick decisions, and invited her husband to play with her in the evening. There is probably not much carry-over of habit from card games to household activities, but it made her feel a little more self-confident.

6. She extended this by trying to do her marketing more expeditiously, and by stunts such as attending a small auction sale and bidding on two or three articles that she did not need. "The few dollars that this fling cost me are charged to *education* in our account book," she confessed. "It was fun to find that I could act promptly enough to get in a bid. In fact, my policy now is not to pass up any chance to make a quick decision. I'm looking for 'em."

7. Gradually Mrs. V. came to recognize that acceptance of responsibility is one of the most conspicuous characteristics of the adult, that she had not been behaving like an adult, and that she would be satisfied with nothing less than the attainment of full adult stature.

All this took time; if her feelings of inferiority and dependence had been more deep-seated, years might have been required unless she had expert help. As it was, the change could be measured from month to month.

"I can see now that I was really acting in a childish way," she concluded. "I was trying to be dependent. It doesn't make any difference now just why I thought I wanted to be a dependent in

life. My motives may have been partly praiseworthy—but I was going about it the wrong way. I recognize now that the main object in life is not to have somebody take care of me, much less to be able to 'hang something' on my husband. As far as I am concerned the main object in life is to be a successful wife, mother, and citizen, and I'm going to accept, and demand, my full share of responsibility. I've made up my mind to that!"



# 12

## *The Two-family Home*

THERE are not enough houses in the United States to go around. More than three million families have taken in what the Census Bureau calls a secondary family. That means that six million families are doubled up—one out of every six in the nation.

Maybe your family is one of the six. How are you managing? There will be some difficulties at best, but the one fourth of the nation's families that live on farms are better off in this respect than the three fourths who live in cities. They have more to do, and more room to move around in.

When two families occupy the same house, the first question to be asked is, "Whose house is this, anyway?" The owner more or less unconsciously feels that he has a right to make the rules. He expects his guests to follow those rules. But if your married son and daughter are living with you at your own request, perhaps they don't exactly look on themselves as guests. Perhaps they think they ought to have a share in making the rules. The first thing, therefore, is to have a clear division of labor, a clear definition of responsibilities. It need not be in writing, but it ought to be as definite and well understood as if it were in writing.

Father and son may have little difficulty in dividing up the work, because they have been doing it for years. A new son-in-law coming to the farm, on the other hand, may feel on the defensive. Probably he has been offered some sort of a partnership, as an inducement to move in. The older man may have to exercise a little forethought and self-control, occasionally, to make the younger feel like a real partner, not a mere hired hand.

But everyday observation shows that friction is more likely to arise between the older and younger woman in the home. Sometimes, of course, a daughter is well satisfied to continue after marriage as before, letting mother make all the decisions. Sometimes, on the other hand, mother is surprised to find that daughter changes suddenly with marriage.

I remember Mrs. V., whose daughter issued a declaration of independence after the wedding day. "I can't understand it," Mrs. V. complained. "Janet and I have worked together harmoniously ever since she was born, you might say. Now she reminds me two or three times a day that she's a married woman—just as good as her mother, although she doesn't put it that way. Of course she is, Dr. Popenoe, but what am I supposed to do about it?"

In this case Janet felt that she had been held down in the past and was now overanxious to assert herself, to have it known that she was now grown up and expected to be treated accordingly. I had to help Janet to be a little less belligerent about it; but I also had to help her mother work out a new policy, in which she really began to treat Janet like an equal. That's a hard thing for a parent to do! They agreed on a division of responsibility which usually has to be made with a daughter-in-law, who comes into the home from the outside and with quite different experience. This rearrangement took some experimenting. Mrs. V. and her daughter have tried a number of combinations without finding any that has all the advantages and no possible drawbacks. They tried dividing the work, mother taking the kitchen and Janet taking everything else. Then Janet felt her husband's taste was not getting enough attention. They tried taking alternate weeks on home management. This latter suited Janet best; it had some inconveniences but for the last two years the home has operated smoothly.

One of the difficult problems to handle is that of the young couple's need for privacy, for an opportunity to entertain their friends in their own home. It is not always easy for parents to appreciate this need, to put themselves in the place of the young people; and it is one of the difficulties that sometimes make a young couple decide to move out. If parents are going to make

the younger couple partners in the home, they will have to inconvenience themselves occasionally, may even have to make excuses to leave home for an afternoon or evening, so the young people can have the place to themselves and perhaps to their friends.

A businesslike arrangement of finances must include such things as the use of the automobile. Dad probably feels that he is being generous in providing the car: "They use it any time they want, just as if it were their own." Questions about paying for the gas, paying for upkeep and repairs, should not be settled wholly by generosity. In the long run, the young couple wants to live by justice rather than by generosity—just as a wife does, in relation to her husband!

Then there is the matter of a mother-in-law. That relationship sometimes causes trouble when two persons are a thousand miles apart. Small wonder if the trouble sometimes becomes acute when the two are living under one roof; when the two have different backgrounds, different habits, different tastes, different ways of doing things.

The nation over, daughter and her husband are twice as likely to live with parents as son and his wife are. But this is less often the case on the farm, where father naturally wants his son to stay with him, to take over as necessary, and to carry on the farm as a going concern when the senior has to drop out. In many instances, therefore, son brings his bride to the parental home.

We'll hope that she won't have any trouble with her mother-in-law. Unfortunately, we only hear about the bad ones. There may be 999 mothers-in-law whose tactful and timely help is the only thing that enables the young couple to succeed. Nobody tells us about those; but they point to the thousandth—who is really a terror. And they forget to point to the bad daughters-in-law, whom a long suffering mother has to endure.

Sometimes the younger woman does go around with a big chip on her shoulder. She needs a few lessons in "How to make friends and influence in-laws." But there ought to be a training course, somewhere in the school system, for mothers-in-law, and for sons-in-law and daughters-in-law; and it ought to be compulsory for every one of us.

The keynote may be struck at the very beginning, by your choice of how to address your in-laws. I made a survey of more than 1,600 young couples in different parts of the United States, to learn what form of address they used. The report was:

		PER CENT
Father and Mother	1,067	66
John and Mary	231	15
Mr. and Mrs.	191	12
Grandpa and Grandma	40	3
Direct address	35	2
Pet names	27	2
Titles (e.g., Doctor)	8	
Initials (e.g., "J. B.")	4	
	<hr/> 1,603	<hr/> 100

Calling parents by their first names is a city rather than a country trick. "Direct address" means merely looking at the person and speaking. It's a poor way to evade the issue. I remember a divorce case in which an old man had married a woman of 80 and complained that his wife always addressed him merely as "Hey, you!" I don't blame him for feeling that this was not romantic.

People who are a bit in awe of their in-laws often start with Mr. and Mrs. and gradually pass to "father" or "mother" as they become better acquainted. I think young people will help to improve the situation if they take the plunge from the very beginning, use the term "mother" or "father," and then let their actions conform.

On the other hand, mother has a hard job to reorganize all the patterns of her life, so that she can treat the younger woman as an equal. You have seen various rating scales to score the qualities of a mother-in-law, but they are usually drawn up by someone who is thinking of city conditions in which the mother-in-law merely comes for an occasional visit. They don't fit the common case of the farm family, where the young couple has moved into

the parental home. I have therefore made a rating scale for mother-in-law, and one for daughter-in-law. They will call attention to some points that are familiar, yet too often overlooked.

It is useless to pretend that two families can live in the same house without occasional difficulties. Even one family can't do it! But the difficulties of the two-family home need not become intolerable if each treats the other as an equal, regardless of age differences; if a definite and businesslike agreement covers finances, privileges, and responsibilities; and if each treats the other as courteously as if they were complete strangers!

### ARE YOU THE PERFECT MOTHER-IN-LAW?

1. You are an objective and neutral spectator in differences of opinion between your son and his wife.
2. You are friendly with all the members of the in-law's family.
3. You take it for granted that your son will appear to forget you frequently; and you neither show nor feel any resentment.
4. You avoid praising your daughter-in-law so lavishly in public as to sound ridiculous or hypocritical.
5. You treat her as an equal, whose information and judgment are valuable, not as a child to be reformed.
6. You wait until she asks you, before offering any suggestions as to how she can make your son happier.
7. You knock on the door before entering her room.
8. You always bear in mind that there is another mother-in-law in the family, who also must be considered.
9. You control your natural impulse to seek her favor by excessive generosity.
10. You control your natural impulse to look into her closet or bureau drawers.

ARE YOU THE PERFECT DAUGHTER-IN-LAW?

1. You remember that your husband knew and loved his mother long before he knew and loved you.
2. You make the in-laws feel that you like them, not because they are related to your husband but because they are wonderful people.
3. You attend strictly to your own affairs in case of friction between your husband and either one of his parents.
4. You make your husband feel that one of the best things about your marriage is the relationship with his family which it brought you.
5. You remember your mother-in-law's birthday, her favorite chair, interest, color, and motion picture stars.
6. You listen courteously when she tells you things that you consider outdated or incorrect.
7. You approve her taste in hats and clothes without attempting to make her over into a junior up-to-the-minute model.
8. You compliment her (whenever the facts justify it) on the way she brought up her children, especially the one who is now your husband.
9. You include her in invitations or social affairs that she would particularly appreciate.
10. You control your natural impulse to look into her closet or bureau drawers.

Instructions for scoring: In each question, give yourself 0 if you answer "not at all" or "never"; 1 for "somewhat," "sometimes," "a little"; 2 for "an average amount," "about as often as not"; 3 if you can say "usually," "a good deal," "frequently"; and 4 if you feel justified in answering "entirely," "practically always." Add up the scores. A perfect score would be 40, and if you come out with that score it may pay you to go over the test again more carefully,

and find out just where you failed to tell the truth! Probably few persons can justly claim a score much above 30. If you fall below 20, you should reconsider your situation and try to improve it all around. If you are very low on any particular item, take that as a cue to improve your behavior on that particular point. You may get a better picture by scoring yourself, then asking your husband or someone else who knows you well to score you, and averaging the scores.

## *Homemakers Need Not Feel Frustrated*

DRUDGERY and monotony, drudgery and monotony. That's all Mrs. E. can see in the job of keeping up her home. "I'm ready to revolt," she declares. "What kind of a life is this for a human being?—just domestic servitude."

I won't try to give her a Pollyanna message, or even to remind her that a lot of intelligent women in the United States, and even more in Europe, would be glad to trade places with her. I won't remark—although it is a fact—that her husband works a good deal harder than she does, and at a more monotonous job, but doesn't waste much time in sympathizing with himself and proclaiming his martyrdom.

I'll agree with her, on the other hand, that a good many women feel just as she does. Let's ask why she feels that way. Without going into any special circumstances of her childhood, which might explain a good deal but of which I know nothing, let's consider two facts that are fairly obvious.

1. She had no training for her present job. She does it inefficiently, with great waste of effort and still greater waste of time.

She can certainly improve, and no one can do it for her. She will have to make the effort on her own account. The woman's page of the daily paper will help her. She may even learn that she can do her job better, in only half the time she now uses; and she can employ that time thus saved in some interesting way.

2. What she (and other women) particularly resent is the loneliness. She hasn't a hard job, but she has a solitary job. Many women now do their wash at the neighborhood launderette, in-



stead of at home. They have company there. She can try that. She can try a partnership in housecleaning with some neighbor. Two of them working together will find it much less tedious.

Her life will be a good deal pleasanter if she can bring a little sociability and a lot more efficiency into her daily routine. It's not impossible.

The idea that homemakers are overworked is so widely held—by homemakers—that it deserves to be examined more closely. If any woman would keep track of her time for a week, the results might surprise her.

Sociologist G. A. Lundberg and associates made a study, from diaries kept by 2,460 different persons in a suburban county of New York state. This was some years ago but, with smaller families and more laborsaving machinery, there should be more, rather than less, leisure time now. They kept track of their leisure time, defined as that which was "not devoted to sleep, work, or the activities incidental thereto." Weekends were of course counted, too. How many hours were left for leisure in the various groups was summarized as follows:

	MEN	WOMEN
Labor	6.8	5.6
White collar	7.3	6.6
High school students	7.4	7.4

Not much difference in the various groups and the two sexes! By comparison with the groups listed above, the average housewife was found to have 9.3 hours per week left for leisure—more than any other group in the whole study.

Part of the trouble is merely emotional. Psychologist J. J. B. Morgan long ago listed eight types of workers; perhaps we might borrow this classification and apply it to homemakers for a moment:

1. The bubbling energy worker.
2. The fearful worker—always afraid of the boss, or of starving to death, or something else that keeps a galley slave working away at the oar.
3. The dutiful worker.

4. The pioneer—rejoicing in the exploration of a new field, even though it means years of drudgery.

5. The applause seeker—most of us like a little recognition, and many a homemaker doesn't get what she's entitled to. Husbands need education about that.

6. The compensating worker—striving to compensate for a real or imagined personal defect.

7. The dominating worker.

8. The intelligent worker.

Any homemaker who looks around will probably be able to find examples of all those types. I hope she will be able to find a good many illustrations of No. 8 among the women she knows; and she'd better prepare to take her stand among them, because that's where she ought to be.

The intelligent worker will recognize that work has to be done, that it can't always be glamorous, and that it is not the purpose of life, but a means to achieving some other purpose, in her case having a home, a husband, children, security, and so on. The intelligent worker will organize the job to get it done as well as possible with the least amount of time and effort. Many city wives are unsuccessful in that, partly from lack of education, partly from lack of effort.

In fact, the greatest failure of homemakers is their failure to improve their efficiency.

This is the conclusion from a study of 326 Michigan families by Irma H. Gross of the section of home economics at the state college. From her survey it appears that most women get into a routine, at which they may be reasonably efficient, but that they lack incentive to keep on improving their efficiency all the time.

Maybe you'd like to score yourself on the scale which Miss Gross\* worked out to measure what she calls "Incentives to Home Management." Following are the items, with the maximum score for each:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| A. Are you working to become more efficient? | 3 |
| B. Are you trying to conserve energy?        | 3 |

\* Gross, Irma H., *Measuring Home Management*, 40-page bulletin issued by Section of Home Economics, Agricultural Experiment Station, Michigan State College, East Lansing, Mich., 1948.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| C. Are you trying to get more leisure time for yourself?              | 2 |
| D. Are you trying to free time to earn money?                         | 2 |
| E. Are you trying to reduce the expenses of your household?           | 5 |
| F. Are you trying to improve your home artistically?                  | 2 |
| G. Are you striving for more social life                              |   |
| (1) Within the family circle?   | 4 |
| (2) Outside the family?   | 2 |
| H. Are you working toward greater participation in community affairs? | 5 |
| I. Is your aim to make family living more satisfactory?               | 7 |

The total score will be 35. Score yourself according to whether you *consciously* strive toward each of these goals. If you are trying, as hard as you think could be reasonably expected, to make yourself more efficient (A, above) credit yourself with 3 points; if you think you are trying about one third as hard as you could, credit yourself with only 1 point. You might have your husband score you separately on this scale and see how his estimate of your ambition agrees with your own.

The ideal homemaker would be trying as hard as possible on all these points, and deserves the maximum score of 35. None of the Michigan women was given a score as high as 20! The average score for the group was about 9. So if you can honestly score yourself 10 or above, you won't have too much reason to feel dissatisfied with yourself. But after that start out to raise it to 20.

It must be admitted that city homes (and most others) are not now built for the benefit of the homemaker. The kitchen has particularly suffered from the progress of civilization.

It ought to be the best room in the house. In the old-fashioned home, it was to a large extent the family living room in a very real sense. Most of the work was done there. Father would sit with his feet to the stove and work on his farm account book, while mother made bread for the week. Two or three children would be shelling peas, cracking nuts, peeling potatoes, or licking the spoon after the frosting had been put on the cake. And after every one else had gone to bed Saturday night, father would bring in the horse bucket and take his weekly bath by the stove.

Later, in city homes, the kitchen went in for efficiency. It was to be as small as possible. Architects bragged of the Pullman kitchen in which mother could reach anything in the room without taking more than one step in any direction. The kitchen was merely a place to work in—and get out of!

It was no longer the center of family life. Family life had no center. Pretty soon the family had no family life!

When the dining room was abolished in many homes as an unnecessary waste of space, the breakfast nook in the kitchen grew in popularity. That was a step in the right direction. It kept the family closer together. One of its greatest values was in giving the wife companionship in her work.

Kitchen work is distasteful to many women, not because it is hard—for it isn't—but because it is solitary and monotonous. In the old days it was a more sociable affair. It can be made more sociable again. Some architects now brag not of the smallness but of the roominess of their kitchens. They are providing a workshop where the family can again carry on many of the activities that make it a family. While mother washes the dishes and father dries them, junior is studying at the breakfast table and sis is writing letters. Meals are taken right off the stove.

Homemaking becomes more enjoyable for many women, when they have company. They can have more company, if the kitchen is made more central in planning homes.

Homemakers also must learn to relax—trite advice, but good advice to most of them, nevertheless. Mrs. C. is one of millions who complains that she is "worn to a frazzle" at the end of each day.

"I have two small children and I do all my own work," she explains. "We have a small home, and I suppose I really don't work very hard compared to millions of other women in the world. Yet before my husband comes home for dinner I have usually become tired, my back aches, my nerves are on edge, and I'm not fit to live with. I can't go on this way."

There is no reason why she should go on this way; but plenty of young mothers, and some older ones, will understand her situation. It is the subject of an interesting experiment now under way at Hiram House, Cleveland, Ohio, where four groups of

young mothers are being given different courses of treatment. Alma C. Kelly reports (in *Marriage and Family Living*) that those who merely tried to lie down and rest 15 minutes each day found little result from it, but those who were taught systematically to relax while resting are enthusiastic over the effects. They are less tired and tense, their dispositions and family relations have improved, they feel better, sleep better, and can see a change for the better in their figures. They are less cranky with the children, ready to smile when their husbands come home, and able to enjoy going out in the evening. Those are the results that most other wives desire, aren't they?

Most of us are so tense and tight that it takes literally weeks, often several months, for us to learn to relax. The public library can furnish some of the recent popular books on this topic by men like Edmund Jacobson and Harold Fink. Get one of these books and begin; or follow the method, developed by psychologist Dorothy H. Yates, of picking out some word that is a cue to the way you want to feel: Peace, quiet, rest, or whatever appeals to you. When you go to bed at night, relax all over as far as possible and repeat this word to yourself. After some weeks, you'll find that you can relax during the daytime merely by throwing yourself on the couch, or even into a comfortable chair, and repeating this word in your mind. It will be the trigger-word.

Any homemaker can make life pleasanter for herself—and for her husband, too—by increasing her own efficiency, doing whatever she can to avoid loneliness, and taking steps to reduce fatigue which is largely nervous and emotional, not physical. She should get a hobby, join some altruistic groups, and take part in some community activities, in the time she thus saves. All this requires no expenditure of money, no investment in costly equipment. It requires mainly a little imagination and a sound philosophy of life.

*Sophistication Is Curable*

WHEN Ensign Brown came home, after three years in the south Pacific, he started to re-establish himself as a citizen and, above all, as a husband.

"I'm up against it," he sighed. "My wife has gone Hollywood."

"You mean she's in the movies?"

"No—just hanging around the outside edge of the fringe," he explained. "I was speaking of Hollywood as a state of mind, maybe I should call it a spiritual disease. She could have had the same experience in New York or Chicago, in New Orleans or Seattle. I mean she's . . . well, she thinks she's sophisticated!"

Sophistication is a serious handicap, not merely to successful marriage and successful parenthood, but to successful living on any basis. Ensign Brown was a bit misleading in referring to it as a disease since, from a psychological point of view, it represents arrested development—although it may take on some of the attributes of a mental disease, at least of a neurosis. The sophisticate gives a spurious importance to really unimportant things, and minimizes the significance of really significant things, just as does the victim of a real mental disease.

Barbara Brown illustrates this. Her husband was vice-principal of a junior college upstate, and a young man of unusual intelligence, ability, and personality. Barbara was a bright and pretty co-ed, an only child of a prosperous grape grower in the neighborhood. Brown married her shortly after her graduation. Only a few months later came the attack on Pearl Harbor. Brown entered the

Navy as a petty officer and worked his way up to ensign. Barbara had not been content to stay at home with her parents, and her husband readily agreed that she should come to Los Angeles and work for Lockheed. But a few months after his departure this work became monotonous, and she quit it to take a minor and less remunerative job in an office that had many contacts with the motion picture industry.

"Then she began to be sophisticated," Brown continued the story. "Barbara is a girl with a wonderful character. She hasn't done anything to be ashamed of—in the ordinary sense. Yet in another sense I'm ashamed of everything she has done. It's . . . well, it's just not *grown-up*."

Brown had chosen exactly the right word. Physically, intellectually, financially, in various other ways, the sophisticate may be a superior person. But socially, emotionally, he has never grown up. Even a superficial review of the facts is enough to make this conclusion inescapable.

The sophisticated person, for instance, cannot be independent—yet independence is one of the most important criteria of emotional maturity. The jellyfish "goes with the crowd," drifting along with the current, taking his speed, direction, and temperature from the water in which he floats. Animals higher in the scale of evolution have attained independence of the environment to a large degree. Man can maintain himself in the tropics or in the arctic, a mile underground or five miles in the air. Similarly in the development of the individual, the child takes his ideas, his standards, his vocabulary, his whole pattern of life from those close to him. When he has really attained maturity he is able to pick and choose. He does not have to shout with the largest crowd—he stands on his own convictions. He directs his life according to the individual philosophy which he has gradually attained.

Not so the sophisticate. No individuality for him! He finds his only satisfaction, his only security, in being like his own little crowd, and in condemning everything that is different. The adolescent in junior high school is not more anxious to wear just the right shoe strings, to dance the latest steps, to be up-to-the-minute in current slang, than is the 40-year-old sophisticate; and the reason is the same in each instance. The immature personality,

feeling no confidence in itself, gains a feeling of confidence by identifying itself with others and dares not take the risk of calling attention to itself by trying to stand alone.

Sophistication flourishes in large cities—the larger the better. The greater the number of people brought together, the less any one individual counts, the less any one individual is likely to be recognized for his own independent merits. All the more, then, does he seek recognition by being like someone else. If he cannot hope to be successfully different, to stand out from the crowd, at least he can hope not to be unsuccessfully different; he can hope that “these people will recognize me as one of them.” And since the artificial life of great cities tends to foster emotional immaturity in a variety of ways, it creates a standard of perpetual adolescence and the main object of many persons then is to be the most adolescent of all the adolescents!

Within a city there are innumerable groups. The more insecure the members of any one group feel, the more they will struggle to offset this by conformity to their own private group. Those “to the manor born” may have a lot of other faults, but they are less driven to a pose of sophistication, because they are less afraid of being pushed out of their social circle. They belong in it; they were born in it. The new arrival is the one who is most anxious to impress people with the fact that he belongs there, because he thinks they won’t know it unless he calls it to their attention. In a rapidly changing and highly insecure group, *everyone* is harassed by the fear of losing caste and therefore exaggerates any type of behavior that he believes will proclaim his “belonging.” In every city there are the equivalents of “Café Society,” of “Greenwich Village,” of “sporting circles,” of “Hollywood,” and so on. From this point of view “Hollywood” is, as Richard Brown recognized, a state of mind, not a geographical location. Barbara was in that state of mind.

“We’re still very much in love,” Brown asserted. “I don’t doubt her love for me, not for a minute. But I sometimes wonder if she isn’t even more in love with herself. It seems that she can’t get along without the admiration and flattery of other men.” That is one of the most obvious marks of the adolescent mentality. Every normal human being wants to be well thought of, but the



craving for attention and praise that characterizes a spoiled child is no part of a normal adult's make-up.

"She seems to have lost all inner resources. She is always wanting to go somewhere, do something. Because of the barrenness of her own inner life, she must depend on outside stimulation. She's bored by herself—I'm just wondering if she isn't bored by me! Everything nowadays must be 'thrilling,' if it is to get any of her attention.

"My expectation was to go back to my job at the college, and give my best to the educational field. She hasn't actually refused, but she keeps finding excuses for staying here. She's perfectly willing to give up her job, but she thinks we ought to settle down in 'more cosmopolitan surroundings,' where I can share all her 'interesting friends'—a bunch of fourflushers, if you ask me. What on earth am I going to do to bring her to her senses, Dr. Popenoe?"

Sophistication is hard to cure. Like a lot of other afflictions, it tends to become progressive. The more one depends on externals, the more one atrophies inwardly and the more necessary the externals are. The more one emphasizes the importance of saying and doing the 'smart' thing, the more one naturally looks down on those who are not 'smart' and the more intolerant one becomes toward any who differ from himself and his own little mutual-admiration society. The more one lives on thrills, the stronger the stimulus required to produce these thrills. But because sophistication is founded on a feeling of inferiority and insecurity, because it is essentially a failure to grow up emotionally, because it is an attempt to live in an adult world with the social attitudes of a high school sophomore, the victim becomes less and less willing to give up this defense which he has built up for himself to cover his unwillingness to face reality. A cure at best represents a long, slow job. Sometimes, as with an opium addict, the dependence has become too great; the patient is doomed. Barbara had not gone that far, and she had the advantage of an understanding husband.

"As I see it," he explained, "it's largely a question of finding some meaning in life. These people that Barbara has been going around with simply don't know what it's all about. They're just children, trying to make a child's game out of life by putting on

their parents' clothes and pretending that they're grownups. They're afraid really to grow up, because they know they can't meet the tests that face them, can't live up to what life expects of adults. So they have worked out an elaborate ritual to cover their fear of growing up and to enable them to remain in a state of permanent adolescence while pretending that it is something very superior.

"Why, that crowd never even heard of a dictionary," he continued disgustedly. "From the way they talk you'd think that *sophisticated* means 'refined, cultured, superior in taste.' If they found that its actual meaning is 'adulterated, perverted, spurious, inferior in quality,' they'd probably compensate by sneering at the dictionary makers!

"I don't believe much can be done for Barbara until I get her away from that crowd; and it isn't going to be easy to get her away."

At this point, however, luck helped out. Dick was offered the position of superintendent of schools in a small city in another state. The idea of being the superintendent's wife, of having a social position at the top, seemed to appeal to Barbara, and she agreed willingly to move, provided that she could spend her summers on the coast. From that time, I followed her re-education through her husband's letters and a yearly visit.

"I'm going to proceed on the assumption that a sophisticate is nothing but a victim of an inferiority complex," Brown explained to me on his last call before starting his inland journey. "One way to treat any inferiority complex would be to find something that the victim can do well, something in which he can excel, and help him to do that. Now in this case it is particularly necessary to find something *worth while* that the victim can do well; and since the pose of sophistication depends so largely on a holier-than-thou attitude, on an intolerance of trifling differences, it will be desirable to find a really cooperative enterprise for Barbara.

"Why, these darned sophisticates are actually the most bigoted, petty, prejudiced, provincial, narrow-minded, intolerant crowd I've ever struck," he exploded suddenly. "Yet one of their most cherished delusions is that they are broad-minded. They boil over with indignation at the way they think the British treated the

Hindus, while they treat their own neighbors, even their own relatives, much worse! I'm certainly going to see that Barbara gets a chance to do something close at hand, instead of emoting over the peasantry of Russia or China!"

His first step, in their new home, was to encourage Barbara to become active in the church. "This was easy," he wrote. "The church women practically met her at the station. Of course she was flattered. I'm going to do everything I can to see that her participation is really functional. If she'll concentrate on 'the social gospel,' it will help her to get that new set of values which she needs, I'm sure."

The next step was to get her into various socially useful activities in the community. Brown himself, in his new position, was often asked to take part in some such activity, and he frequently countered by suggesting that his wife be invited, instead. Before she knew it, Barbara was on a committee for interracial relations, was one of the directors of a teen-age recreation center, and was investigating for the Women's Club the scandal of inadequate housing for migratory workers. She began to feel that there were a lot of things more important than the merits of the different vintage years or the respective hair-do's of the currently prominent actresses.

In the third place, she began to get a better understanding of what it means to grow up. Brown handled this problem unobtrusively but effectively, sometimes by leaving on the table an interesting and pertinent book such as Luella Cole's *Growing into Maturity* (which discusses sophistication particularly well), sometimes by reading a paragraph from a work on philosophy, sometimes by discussing with her the deeper implication of an episode in contemporary history. He helped her, for example, to recognize the co-operative movement in their valley, not as a scheme by which farmers could buy their groceries a little more cheaply, but as an illustration of one of the most important democratic processes—the ability of men and women to work together for the benefit of all concerned.

In the fourth place, she started a pregnancy. When they married they had planned to have children, but they delayed because of the war. After that, Barbara became vague—of course she wanted a

family sometime, but she wanted a few more years of "freedom to acquire culture," to pursue "the amenities of life." As she grew up, however, in her own emotional development, she longed more and more for the personal experience of parenthood.

Among the many reasons why parenthood is so satisfying, one certainly is the feeling it gives of being engaged in creative work, of being linked with the future, of belonging to the great biological stream of adults fostering the young. As "sophistication" represents a neurotic individualism, so genuine parenthood represents an altruism, a consciousness of the greater importance of the race as compared with the individual. The sophisticate is sometimes a parent (perhaps by accident); but a parent only in a technical sense! The parent who has a deep, personal realization of his own organic connection with the fundamental purposes of life cannot be sophisticated.

When they came to California for their third summer at the shore, Brown spent an evening with me, primarily to talk over some plans for introducing a more thorough preparation for family life into his school system, but secondarily to report on his private project, "the cure of sophistication."

"Of course the only intelligent thing to do is to prevent it," he affirmed. "Probably you noticed that survey of attitudes of pupils in the seventh and eight grades of the schools in one of the southern states—and it could just as well happen here! The girls were asked what person, living or dead, they would rather be, if they could make a choice. The largest number named George Washington, the second largest number named a movie actress of no merit whose disintegrated sexual life was just then being nationally exploited through newspaper accounts of a sensational trial. Neither of these is the best model for a 12-year-old girl.

"Every outstanding educator in the United States agrees on the need of education for marriage and family life, but the inertia of the educational system is so great that it takes us years to make the progress that we ought to make in months. If we're going to enable adolescents to grow successfully to maturity and not get held up in a permanent stage of arrested development called sophistication"—he made a wry grimace as he spoke the word—"we'll absolutely have to emphasize the realities of life in our

schools, even if we spend a little less time on some of the forgotten writers of English literature."

"Agreed," I responded. "But awaiting that time, we will still have sophisticates to deal with. After they get that way, what are we going to do with them? You have probably worked out a formula by this time."

"Yes," he answered. "Of course a formula always makes the solution look too simple. Applying the formula may take literally years—it took me a couple of years to apply it to Barbara, although she is much better material to work on than one would ordinarily have. Really, she's a wonderful woman. And the baby's just like her! You ought to. . . ."

"Wait a minute, Brown," I admonished. "I must warn you that I'm a father, too. If we start on that line, we're sunk. I don't ask you to forget the baby; but don't forget the formula, either. Maybe it was that word *formula* that started you off on a tangent. Come back to the other kind of formula: what are we going to do for the sophisticates?"

"O.K.," he grinned, "but you'll really have to come to Long Beach and see that baby for yourself—I couldn't do her justice, anyway. But as for the sophisticates, I think the formula would be something like this:

"First, make a list of your interests and activities, and ask yourself what difference they will make to the world, 30 years from now.

"Second, pick out one thing (a) that *would* have some effect on the world's future, (b) that needs to be done, (c) that you are able to do, and (d) that will bring you a reasonable amount of legitimate recognition.

"Third, do it."

## ARE YOU SOPHISTICATED?

1. You think it is more important to get your beauty treatments at "the right place" than it is to get the best possible treatments.
2. You think the most valuable quality of an acquaintance is to be amusing.

3. You think that the motives of most people for most actions are less creditable than they appear to be.
4. You think it is more worth while to be able to talk smartly about George Gershwin than to be able to talk intelligently about the foundations of eugenics.
5. You think that people who differ from you in their tastes and habits are, somehow or other, a bit inferior.
6. You expect to get more thrill out of daily life now than you did when you were in high school.
7. You agree with the man who said, "As well expect a lover of money to be content with one dollar as to expect me to be content with one woman."
8. You are prouder of being able to call the head waiter by his first name than of knowing the name of the congressman from your district.
9. You would rather be known as mixing the most successful cocktails, than as making the most successful marriage in your crowd.
10. You would rather read a clever review of a current book than to read the book itself.

Check up on yourself by the foregoing statements. If as many as half of them apply to you, *look out!* Your ideas are becoming sophisticated which, according to the dictionary, mean, "adulterated, perverted, spurious, or of inferior quality." You are in danger of remaining in a state of arrested mental development at the adolescent level, and you will have to make a determined and persistent effort if you really want to grow up.

# 15

## *Make Your Four Wishes Come True*

You have four wishes.

Perhaps you don't know it. Perhaps you are confused and dissatisfied because you don't know what you really want from life.

Every human being wants the same things. All life is a striving to accomplish something, to get somewhere. Whether he knows it or not, every human being is attempting to gain four objectives. He has these four fundamental wishes, which he is trying to make real.

If he succeeds in making his four wishes come true, he is happy.

If he fails, he is likely to be frustrated and miserable; and he will continually make trouble for himself, and others, without knowing the reason why.

Simply because you are a human being, and alive, you have these four wishes:

1. The wish for *response*.

This is the craving for friendship in the broadest sense of the term; the craving for comradeship, for intimacy, for affection. As a child, you want your parents not merely to respond to your needs, but to respond to your smiles or screams. Later you want friends—which means response. Eventually you want particularly the friendship of one *person* of the other sex who will respond strongly to you, and to no one else—which means love.

Lack of these responses—lack of love, of friendship, of human contacts—is often felt to be such a deprivation that death is preferable.

2. The wish for *recognition*.

This involves the existence of self-respect and self-esteem, of

pride and ambition. You want to be recognized as amounting to something. You are *somebody*—not a cipher, not a mere statistic in the census returns. You want to feel that you are something, or stand for something, or can do something, that makes you unique and leads others to approve of you and admire you. You crave not merely a feeling of social approval but of power. The more powerful you are, the more people will be unable to ignore you. They will have to recognize you. They will know that you are there.

3. The wish for *experience*.

From infancy onward, boredom and monotony are enemies of well-being and the attempt to escape from them is responsible for many troubles as well as many achievements. It is at the root of most learning. Curiosity leads people into scientific research, or even into marriage! Love of adventure leads them not merely into trivial escapades, but into exploration, or even into war. The wish for new experience leads people to drive at new speeds, to take new jobs, to sample new drinks, to attend new churches, to visit new countries, and to date new girls!

4. The wish for *security*.

This is partly a matter of habit. The baby does not want any change in his feeding time or in his sleeping arrangements. He wants to feel secure; he wants to feel that the world is solidly and durably organized around him and that it will not slip out from under him or play any tricks on him.

The adult wants to preserve the values in his own, larger scheme of life. If any marked change in his health, wealth, religion, or politics is forced upon him, he is likely to be uncomfortable because he feels insecure.

This need for security is a great conservative influence, but it is also a stimulus that leads people to make exertions which they would otherwise avoid. They want to provide for their children or for a "rainy day." The wish for security often determines which doctor gets their ailments, which party gets their vote, which church gets their pew rent.

Like the others, this is a deep-seated and far-reaching factor which can be recognized among animals far down in the scale of evolution.



These four wishes (long ago made familiar by the sociologist W. I. Thomas) cover your life. Whether you know it or not, you are striving to attain them; and to the extent that you know it and strive purposefully and systematically, you will be likely to live in a way that satisfies you.

If you would live wisely and well, organize your life deliberately to make these four wishes come true *for you*. Think them over occasionally; check up on yourself. As a substitute for the conventional New Year's resolutions, it is profitable to take an inventory at the end of each year, determine how far you have balanced the requirements of your four wishes, and make any changes that will bring you closer to the goal.

In doing this, there are several points to bear in mind:

1. The most satisfactory behavior is that which satisfies the largest number of these wishes at once. That makes for economy of effort.

Most of the great experiences of life tend to satisfy all of these needs simultaneously. That is one of the reasons why they are recognized universally to be great experiences.

Organized religion, for instance, provides response through the fellowship it creates as well as through the personal relationship which is felt to exist between oneself and God. It provides recognition in similar ways; it provides security, and it provides new experience, which is often developed systematically, not merely through such rituals as baptism and confirmation, but through the deepening of an inner life. Altogether apart from many spiritual and transcendental aspects that need not here be discussed, it is evident that religion has a powerful capacity to satisfy many human needs. It is not surprising, then, that religion has been an almost universal part of human life, even among most primitive peoples. If you are not getting all these values from your own religious life, perhaps you need to change the basis of your participation.

Part of the unique value of marriage, again, lies in the fact that it also satisfies all of these wishes at once. You derive from it the most intimate and perfect response, you gain recognition as having attained one of the principal goals of life, you acquire new experience through the mutual interaction of your personality and that of the partner, and you receive security, emotionally and in many other respects, which marriage alone can furnish.

Contrast marriage with any other association between the sexes, and it is easy to see why marriage is popular. Think over the relationship occasionally and see if you can make it cover these four areas any more fully and deeply than at present. If so, you will know what line to follow in enriching your life.

2. When one of these wishes is satisfied *at the expense of another*, mental conflict may result.

Much of the unhappiness of life comes directly from that source. If you seek new experience in such ways that you lose all feeling of security, or if you depend so much on security that you cut yourself off from new experience, then you will have these powerful strivings, within your own nature, working at cross-purposes with each other. In extreme cases the result will be something like coasting downhill in an automobile and suddenly throwing your gears into reverse. The resulting inner conflict will not only prevent all action but may tear you to pieces, figuratively speaking!

3. If you *must* be thwarted in attaining one of these wishes, it is important to recognize this frankly and make suitable arrangements to compensate for this frustration.

You can proceed along several possible lines. For instance you may become so absorbed in one line that it will fill your whole life. Occasionally one finds a scholar or inventor who is so much absorbed in the quest for new experience that he has no time for anything else. Wife and family are neglected, creditors forgotten, friends ignored, health sacrificed.

Probably no one would claim that such a life is well balanced. For most of us, balance is not only safer but more satisfying. It is easy to cite individuals who have sacrificed everything else to the attainment of one goal, but it is not easy to prove that they would not have been more useful and happier if they had maintained a better balance. Most of the good work in the world is done, not by monomaniacs but by persons who are living full, rounded, and well-balanced lives. The single-track mind too often runs onto a siding and remains there. The hermit usually escapes from the dangers, and triumphs, of life only by reducing his activities so much that he can be said to be not half alive.

A safer policy, if you are cut off from the natural fulfillment of one wish, is to seek the desired result in a different way. The light-house keeper is cut off from a normal social life. He can't go to

the lodge meeting every Thursday night or the service club luncheon on Tuesday. He may, however, develop through correspondence, or by means of a short-wave set, an even larger circle of friends than he would have had in the heart of the city. The woman who, through failure to marry, is cut off from motherhood may help the underprivileged children of the community, and may devote part of her life to seeing that other girls do not make the mistake she did of letting the normal time for marriage pass by. Thus she may greatly enrich her own life as well as that of the community.

If you are irremediably prevented from attaining a wish, face that fact squarely and honestly. Don't evade, don't pretend, don't lie to yourself, don't sulk or have a tantrum. Don't butt your head against a stone wall, or sit down and weep at the foot of it. "Accept a substitute." But in choosing a substitute, make sure that it conforms with the other wishes.

Such problems, however, usually face only the older person. The younger person still has his life ahead of him. He is in a position to plan intelligently, and then to carry out his plans. If he understands what his four wishes really are, if he determines that he will make them come true, he can do it.

## *Moods Can Mar Your Marriage*

As Mr. C. approaches home, his heart becomes heavier. He opens the door and walks in apprehensively. His wife is in the kitchen, but takes no note of his arrival.

"Hello, darling," he calls out as he hurries to her. "My, but you look fine. How is everything?"

"Oh, all right," she replies in a sepulchral tone, yielding to his embrace with the responsiveness of a cigar-store wooden Indian and going on with her cooking without looking at him.

Mr. C. hesitates a minute, then goes back into the living room and picks up the evening paper. "She's got it again," he sighs inwardly. "How long, O Lord . . . ?"

Fits of depression are a common and serious threat to marital happiness, especially if they are allowed to become more frequent and more intense with the passage of the years. And they are quite likely to become worse unless a definite effort is made to prevent it.

They are more common with women than with men, but husbands may also be problems to their wives in this respect. Mr. M. spent all of last Sunday sitting in a chair and brooding over his troubles. To any remarks or inquiries he would merely shake his head. He refused even to come to dinner. How can anyone make a happy home in an atmosphere like that?

There are as many causes of depression as there are persons involved. Some people are born with a constitution that is inclined to slump. But in any event, you can usually do something about it: and if you don't do something about it you are guilty of much more than contributory negligence should your marriage also begin to slump.

What are you going to do? First, take it for granted that, since you have been depressed before, you'll be depressed again.

"I borrowed a line from Mighty Casey, who struck out," Mr. Y. related. "I printed on a small card the words: *That ain't my style*. When I feel blue in the morning I keep it in front of me and I remember that this spell of the blues is not what I'm really like—it's something I've got to get rid of. So I just hold on and wait for the wheel to turn. So far, it has never failed to turn, sooner or later!"

This knowledge (and it is true of most cases) that a spell of depression is not going to last of course applies with much greater force to the depression that so many women feel at some time during the monthly cycle. A wife can harm her marriage greatly if she does not handle this intelligently.

"You bet I watch the calendar," Mr. N. declared. "There are certain times when I know better than to try to ask anyone home for dinner. In fact, I sometimes plan to be out of town on important business for a few days, while waiting for my wife's storm to blow over. It would help a lot in our home if she would learn how to handle herself at that time of the month instead of just giving way to her feelings."

In general, such phases can be treated like any other depression described here; and this is true even of the deeper and more prolonged depressions that some women experience around the time of the menopause. The latter are due partly to glandular factors, but perhaps more to psychological factors. Administration of hormones sometimes helps them; in more serious instances, electric shock may produce satisfactory results.

But such cases, requiring the aid of a physician, are not the most common. In the more frequent situation, you will have to deal with yourself, and the first thing to do is to be a bit philosophical about it; to remember as did Mr. Y. that the *real you* is something different; that a lot of other people have troubles, most of them worse than your own.

Meanwhile, postpone any important decision. Don't let your present self get caught in an action—particularly one that concerns your marriage—which should be taken only by your real and permanent self.

Build up your health, of course; avoid fatigue and constipation;

get plenty of sleep. But don't give way to your feelings by idleness. Keep up at least some light routine occupation—gardening, house cleaning, anything that will keep mind and hand occupied without much strain or the need of making many decisions.

Finally, lay out a definite plan of campaign and stick to it. You may have to plan this in advance of the depression, so that you can bring it out of the pigeonhole as soon as you recognize by your symptoms that it is time to act. And you may have to experiment a bit to find what meets your needs.

The general idea is to go after your problem from all sides. The more lines along which you can push an attack, the more quickly you can win.

Don't blame circumstances; tackle *yourself*—there's where the difficulty really is, and not in the stars, in the wars, in your husband, in the children, or in your mother-in-law.

Depression is more easily improved by various little devices and expedients than are many other traits of personality. But, as in dealing with all such traits, it is application, experience, practice, that will help you, not mere reading, affirming, wishing, or hoping. Experiment along such lines as the following, until you find what meets your particular requirements:

1. If you are able to do so, try to find the fundamental emotional conflicts that may underlie your depression and re-educate yourself.

If you had to consult a psychiatrist, this is what he would attempt to do for you. Most people can't consult a psychiatrist, and it is not easy to do the job for yourself, but you can make a start—preferably during your more comfortable interludes.

Mrs. O. began to go back over her early years. "I came to the conclusion," she relates, "that a lot of my vague feelings of anxiety, of dread that something unascertainable, but unpleasant, was going to happen, went back to the death of my father when I was four years old.

"Naturally, it was a big change in my life. My mother had a hard time keeping things going, with two little children on her hands. She gave up our home, and we were passed around among various relatives. I never knew what was going to happen next. I had no feeling of security.

"It isn't surprising that I became apprehensive. It isn't sur-

prising that this childhood pattern became so deeply ingrained that it has stayed with me and colored my life for thirty years since. But it is surprising to me that it took me so long to figure it out.

"One day I looked at myself in the mirror. 'Jane,' I admonished myself, 'you're a fool. What are you afraid of? Actually you're afraid that your mother can't take care of you now that your father is dead. But she herself has been dead for ten years, too! You're just living in the past—you're still living in your childhood. When are you going to grow up? When are you going to discover that you're no longer a four-year-old child, but a thirty-four-year-old wife who has a wonderful husband and the most precious baby in the world? When are you going to stop living in the past and begin to live in the present?'"

"I said it to myself, aloud, Dr. Popenoe," she continued, "and I felt better. I've kept that idea uppermost in my mind whenever it becomes useful. I still have times when I feel discouraged and helpless, but they come less frequently now, and when they do come I don't sink quite so far into the depths as I used to. Don't you think I'm really finding my way out of the jungle?"

Yes, I think she is.

2. Get wider interests. Broaden your perspective. Look for new opportunities. List your own assets and see if there are not some which you have not realized fully. Start in on one of them now.

Mrs. E. had been a music teacher before marriage. When she came to see me she had a husband and two children. Her husband did not want her to teach any more—he said the proper care of the children would keep her busy enough. He did not give her much of his time because he belonged to a fishing club—twenty devotees had joined together to buy a boat and if he didn't go fishing every Saturday and Sunday he didn't get his money's worth out of his investment.

In his place as a companion Mrs. E. had his aunt, a healthy woman who at the age of sixty had decided that she was finished and must simply be a burden on others for the rest of her life. She had lent Mr. E. a few hundred dollars to finish college. He had repaid the debt years ago, but declared that he felt a natural moral obligation to make a home for her as long as she lived.

Condemned to give up the work she loved, to endure the

energetic parasite in her home, and to give her attention largely to routine concerns for which she had no heart, Mrs. E. became more and more depressed. She began to lose her grip on life. She could see no way out—she felt trapped, and might easily have ended in a mental hospital. She needed a little help in working her way out, but the direction she must take would be clear to any reader.

Auntie had to get a home, and a job, elsewhere (incidentally finding some happiness for the first time in a number of years). Her husband had to find time to build up a normal social and recreational life with his wife and children. Mrs. E. herself had an opportunity to take charge of the music in the Sunday School of a neighboring church. As she began to use her talents more fully, her depression disappeared.

3. Put up a good bluff. *Act* as if you felt gay. Maybe you'll actually feel gayer, if you do. Practice walking with a springy step, no matter how much lead you feel in your shoes. Whistle while you work. Feel a pride in your ability to keep up appearances.

4. Be with more people more frequently. Realize that many of them have a genuine interest in you and your welfare—you're not alone in the world. Try to greet them more cordially than usual.

Keep away from anyone who is too gloomy; yet try to find someone much worse off than yourself and lend a hand. There may be times when you prefer to be alone, and this is quite proper, but don't retire into solitude for long.

5. Enjoy nature. Here again tastes differ; but many persons find uplift at the seashore, on a mountain top, or beside a waterfall.

6. Build the necessary new habits and attitudes for a good fight. Life is a fight, and the exercise of all one's faculties in the struggle is the source of a large part of the joy of life. A depression, on the other hand, is merely a method of attempting to avoid this full exercise of your faculties; it is a device whereby you try to evade the battle of life.

Fight it out on that basis. Fix your attention, not on your own feelings, but on some outside goal. Lose yourself in striving toward the goal, instead of sitting still to "stew in your own juice."

If you fight yourself you will intensify the inner conflict. Fight something else! In a depression, your vital energy is absorbed or neutralized, inwardly. Get it out and put it to work. Drain it away



from your own inner life, turn it into outward-directed channels of activity, and you'll feel better.

Achilles sulking in his tent, brooding over the slights he had received, was better known to earlier generations of high-school students, who read Homer's *Iliad*, than he is today; but he is a good illustration. He was finally aroused to action by a determination to fight, in order to avenge the death of his friend Patroclus at the hand of the Trojan Hector. When he got into the fight again, his problem was solved.

Sam Houston went into a serious depression after learning, on his wedding night, that his bride was actually in love with another man.

He sought refuge with the Indians and in alcohol—one of the worst possible means of dealing with a depression. It was the need to get into a fight that aroused him—the thought that the Indians were being shamefully treated and that he must do something to help them get justice.

Achilles and General Houston, like thousands of others, were lost so long as they sulked and brooded over their own problems. They were saved when they found something outside of themselves which demanded aggressive action.

7. Recognize that some jobs are too important to be neglected, no matter what your feelings. Abraham Lincoln furnishes one of the best illustrations of the management of depression tendencies. His job was too big to be abandoned. He was faced with a fight for the preservation of the Union. In comparison with such an emergency, his personal feelings were of no consequence.

You may not have the same task to perform that Lincoln had—or that Achilles, Sam Houston, or any other human being is confronted with. But you have your own job to do, your own fight to make. Depression is surrender. Get in the fight—go in and win.

*Give the First Baby Second Place*

SONNY has not yet cut his first tooth, but he has already started a lot of trouble. Everyone agrees that he is just too sweet for words, but he has not made life as sweet for his parents as one might expect.

May feels particularly indignant about her husband's behavior. "Why can't Clyde leave me alone," she demands, "and stop trying to give me advice? Whose baby is this, anyway? From the fuss he makes, you'd think *he'd* carried it in *his* body for nine months; that *he* had given up everything else for it; that *he* had faced death and gone through the tortures of hell to bring it into the world! He's just a great big selfish baby himself, that's what he is—always wanting attention!"

She stops because she is out of breath; moreover she is by this time sympathizing so much with herself that her grief comes near to overwhelming her.

Clyde is sullen. "It's my baby, and she's my wife," he asserts, "but nobody would know it. You'd think I was just an interloper—except when payday comes around. If I want anything, I never get it—she's too busy with Sonny. If I want to go somewhere, I have to go alone—she's going to take Sonny over to her mother's for a conference, or her mother is on the way over to our place. If I make a suggestion about the care of my own child, she and her mother bawl me out and come pretty near to ordering me out of my own home. Apparently the only thing I'm good for now is to pay the bills. We were happy enough until the baby came."

Poor little Sonny may lose his home even before he is old

enough to say "Papa" and "Mama." It's an extreme case; yet everyone knows of homes in which similar difficulties have arisen. Many a marriage is strained, occasionally even broken, by the event that should improve it more than any other one thing—the arrival of the first baby. That event often represents the first great crisis in a marriage. It is always a turning point. The way in which husband and wife take it is often decisive. Will they make it a bond to draw them together, or a wedge to drive them apart?

It is not merely a crisis psychologically, as it was for May and Clyde. It is also a crisis financially. Louise, for instance, kept her job after marriage. She and Charles were each getting something like \$150 a month. They lived up to the joint income and thought it was not enough. Then she became pregnant. The family income was reduced by one half, just when they needed more instead of less! They had failed to plan ahead, and of course they had some difficult adjustments to make.

Since this crisis is so common, it deserves more study than it gets. Its management should be taught as a part of preparation for marriage. Most couples work it out for themselves. I had a chance to watch one of them do so very successfully.

It was Suzanne who took the initiative. "We're expecting to make a 'eugenic contribution' in three or four months," she explained to me, "and I don't want to lose my husband in the process."

"Does he seem to be misplaced?" I asked.

"Well, it's probably my fault. Uncle Charles read the riot act to me this morning. He told me I'd better go to the American Institute of Family Relations and get a little elementary education, so I wouldn't make the same mistake my mother did."

"Tell me about her."

"Uncle Charles says she was a racketeer."

"Figuratively, you mean?"

"Anyhow, she broke up her home. I can't remember my father—she divorced him while I was a baby. I know I was brought up in a very abnormal atmosphere. For years my one thought has been that when I married, I'd leave nothing undone to avoid making the same mistake my mother made."

"That attitude will go as far as anything to make your marriage a success," I encouraged her.

"Well, it seems there were a good many things I didn't know. Mother died shortly after I finished high school, and I took a job. I was already self-supporting so I didn't go to live with any relatives. And even your own relatives don't like to tell you too many things to the discredit of your own parents.

"Last night Uncle Charles and Aunt Elizabeth dropped in on us. Lowell and I had been quarreling. They saw there was trouble, and Uncle Charles stopped on the way to his office this morning, when he knew Lowell would be gone, and laid me out.

"He says mother was a spoiled child, always seeking attention and trying to dominate other people. She found her pregnancy was an easy way to impose on her husband. When she wanted anything done, or when things didn't go to suit her, she would begin to complain of her symptoms and make him feel like a brute and a cad. It was just what she had been looking for!

"Uncle Charles says she really had a very easy pregnancy and anyway, he claims, men go through lots worse things in war, without asking for sympathy all the time. She got an illegitimate profit out of her pregnancy. That's why he calls her a racketeer.

"On the one hand, she could demand any amount of extra attention because of the sacred and heroic experience she was undergoing. On the other hand, she could justify herself in any dereliction or even dishonesty by taking shelter behind her pregnancy. She claimed father had inflicted on her a disease of nine months' duration."

"That's nonsense," I interposed. "Pregnancy is a normal biological function, and during most of the nine months the average woman feels better than at any other time in her life."

"Maybe she felt good, too, because Uncle Charles says she never felt better than when she was browbeating her husband. I told you she wasn't a pleasant character!

"After I was born, she practically told father she didn't need him any more. He had served his purpose and had better get out of the way and let her devote her life unhampered to the big job of bringing me up. Mother thought she had very advanced ideas about motherhood."

"I'd hardly call that particular idea an advanced one," I lectured her as a biologist. "It's more than a million years out of date. The whole progress of evolution has been in the direction of ty-

ing the father more closely to the mother-child combination. The woman who wants to put her husband out of the picture in favor of the baby is a throwback to a stage earlier than the chimpanzees, just as is the man who wants to 'love 'em and leave 'em.'"

"I don't know how much father loved her, but he left her mighty fast," Suzanne rejoined. "Uncle Charles told me all this and a lot more that wasn't very enjoyable family history. He said he didn't want to see me wreck another family by using my baby as a club to beat my husband. So here I am. Put me on the track, and I'll try to stay there."

Suzanne's situation was doubtless not as bad as she had feared; but she had fallen too easily into the habit of talking about "my baby" instead of "our baby." Uncle Charles correctly suspected that she was letting her pride of possessiveness become more important in her life than the success of her marriage. Lowell had been childish in the matter, but that did not change the fact that she herself had been childish in the matter, too.

She quickly changed her tactics, not as a mere expedient of technique but from profound conviction. She recognized that one of the greatest values of the baby *to her* would be the way in which it enriched *her husband's* life and thereby strengthened their marriage. She became more demonstrative in showing her regard for and devotion to her husband, not merely because he was the father of *her* child, but because *they* had a child. She practiced the "we-psychology" which has become popular in recent years.

She showed Lowell, moreover, that valuable as the baby was, he himself was more valuable. This did not involve any depreciation of the baby or any pampering of the husband. It is, in fact, a logical necessity. *In any marriage* it is a misfortune for the children as well as the parents if the parents do not love each other more than they love the children. (Of course, it is a different kind of love.) The child will have to lead his own life, and he will be severely handicapped if he is given first place in the family. But mother and father cannot lead their own lives—they must live with reference to each other and to their marriage. They must therefore put the marriage first.

At the Institute office we began by giving them both a better understanding of what pregnancy is. Both of them had the usual ignorance of educated people in this regard—an ignorance which

is unbelievable unless one has had a chance to see its manifestations. When they rid themselves of some of the customary ignorance, mystery, and superstition, they also rid themselves of various stray fears. Fortunately, there are now a lot of good books and pamphlets for this purpose.

As Suzanne understood better the course of pregnancy, she knew better what she needed and what she did not need from her husband. As Lowell got a better grasp of the whole process, he was able to give his wife more of the help she needed and less attention that she did not need.

The childbirth was a normal one. Suzanne did not have the help of a mother, which means so much to the usual young wife at that time. Lowell was her principal stand-by and since he knew what he was doing, he did not feel it necessary to put on any of the traditional pose of insanity or imbecility that some husbands affect at that time. As soon as the baby came home he began to take a fair share of the chores connected with its care and was greatly pleased with himself.

"There isn't anything that Suzanne can do for little Mary Jo that I can't also do," he boasted.

"Wait a minute," I cautioned anxiously. "I understand that the baby is not bottle-fed."

"I stand corrected," he grinned a bit sheepishly. "But you ought to see what an expert job I do of bathing her on Sundays."

A couple of months later, Suzanne dropped in at the office one afternoon.

"Where's Mary Jo?" I inquired.

"I left her with Aunt Elizabeth. I'm meeting Lowell at the plant. We'll have dinner downtown and go to the movies."

"Good idea."

"Do you really think so, Dr. Popenoe? Some of my friends say I'm an unnatural mother to neglect a baby only ten weeks old."

"There are plenty of neglected children in the world," I argued, "but do you actually know of one among the families of your acquaintances?"

"I suppose not."

"But you do know of children who are suffering from overattention and oversolicitude, rather than neglect?"

"I was one of them," she replied with a wry face.

"And you also know of husbands and wives who are suffering from neglect while their children are not being 'neglected' enough?"

"O.K.—here I go," she laughed as she left the room.

They brought Mary Jo in to make the acquaintance of the entire staff, when she was a year old. "This is what takes second place in our home," Suzanne said with a satisfied smile.

"Evidently she hasn't suffered from neglect," I observed.

"Neither have we. But she's such a darling that it would be awfully easy for me to spend all my time on her and let everything else go hang. We can both see now that we have saved ourselves a lot of trouble by keeping the center of gravity of the home where it belongs."

"Let's make a record for posterity," I suggested. "Maybe Mary Jo herself can profit by it twenty years from now. What are the leading conclusions from your experience?"

Lowell and I compared notes while Suzanne and Mary Jo added appropriate comments, each in her own way, from time to time. We agreed that every young couple should take four steps.

1. Give themselves a real education, which the schools probably failed to give them, as to what childbearing involves.

2. The father will of course take second place for a short time when the baby is born. It is the mother's responsibility to see that he takes second place for as short a time as possible, the marriage itself—father and mother together—being put back into first place quickly.

3. The father should accept willingly his share of the discomfort that goes with a baby, just as he takes his share of the pleasure—the much greater pleasure—associated with it. For this purpose he will not cultivate the common pose that a man can't take care of a baby.

4. The mother, on the other hand, must not expect her husband to do a full day's work at the office and come home to do most of the work for her as well. There must be a balance. She must also make sure that her own mother and other female relatives do not upset this balance.

"After you've been through it," Suzanne concluded, "it's easy enough to see that when a baby is permitted to take first place in

the home, either in the actions of the parents or in the thinking of the parents, there is going to be a spoiled baby and perhaps also a spoiled marriage.

"If the baby is given second place, and the success of the marriage itself is given first place, every member of the family will get what's coming to him. Look at us!"

### HERE IS THE PERFECT FATHER

1. He modestly recognizes that there never was such a thing as a perfect father.
2. He gets out of bed quietly and cheerfully at night when it is his turn to warm Junior's bottle; he does not wait to be kicked out.
3. He does not mention continually that Junior weighed  $7\frac{1}{2}$  pounds at birth, as if he valued the boy for quantity rather than quality.
4. He can change a diaper under 40 seconds, starting from scratch.
5. He insists that his wife occasionally go off for a complete holiday while he runs the home.
6. He does not begin, before the baby's birth, to quarrel with his wife as to whether it shall be sent to a coeducational or a separate college.
7. He is convinced that bringing up children is not "women's work."
8. He does not believe that the way he was brought up is the best example the world has ever seen of how a child should be reared, and that what was good enough for him is good enough for Junior.
9. He feels that he was not born with all the knowledge required for parenthood and suggests that he would like to go with you to Parent-Teacher Association meetings.



10. He recognizes that fatherhood is an experience which greatly helps a man to grow up emotionally, and he is determined to give frequent evidence of his growth.

If your husband does not live up to all these requirements immediately, don't try to reform him by lectures. Simply be patient, and set him a good example.

## *Build Your Marriage on a Sexual Foundation*

THERE are seven or eight million married couples in the United States who do not find their sexual relationship satisfactory—if the best estimates are correct.

Sometimes the trouble arises after years of marriage and merely reflects a more general antagonism. Often the trouble dates from the wedding day and reflects a lack of proper education.

The trouble may grow out of mere ignorance of what to expect. One such couple came to see me recently. Kenneth and Phyllis had just returned from their honeymoon, they told me. They had enjoyed the visit to Yosemite, but they were worried about their marriage, even though it was now of only 22 days duration.

"It's our sexual relationship," Phyllis explained. "I don't respond normally and completely as I expected to, and it's causing us both a great deal of anxiety."

Their anxiety was premature, I assured them, and showed them the figures on hundreds of normal marriages. A climax was attained by the wife after the following lengths of time:

	PER CENT
At first intercourse	25
After days or weeks	27
After 1 to 11 months	26
After one year or more	16
Never	6
	<hr/> 100

"Half of all the women who marry have the same experience that you are having," I pointed out. "You could hardly consider that unusual, could you? Statistically, it has no relation to the subsequent success of the marriage. Did you try to get any special education for marriage?"

"Well, no. We weren't engaged very long, but we felt that our emotional reactions to each other were so normal that everything was sure to be perfect in our marriage."

"And it will be," I predicted. I gave them a copy of a pamphlet which we had prepared for the purpose,\* and sent them home. A week later Kenneth telephoned. "I just wanted to tell you that everything is O.K.," he reported.

Again, some of the supposed sexual maladjustment is of the most superficial kind, growing out of ignorance of the most elemental facts of anatomy, physiology, or psychology. There was Gustav—a good husband in every other respect but an impatient and in-artistic lover. His wife was not worried by her own unresponsiveness, but he was.

A few questions led to a few suggestions as to what a woman expects—her slower tempo, her preference for an approach that is not too direct. "It just seems as if a miracle happened," he came in one day to tell me enthusiastically. But it was no more of a miracle than the ability of the wife, who spoke only English, to understand him when he also spoke English. He had been trying to talk to her in a different language than her own—figuratively speaking.

Gustav went into marriage knowing nothing. Gordon, on the other hand, knew too much that wasn't so. He complained of his wife's unresponsiveness. When I asked him a few questions about himself, he cut me short. "The trouble is entirely on the part of my wife," he informed me a bit loftily, "because I'm frank to say that I myself had a good deal of sexual experience before I married her."

That was just the trouble. From association with prostitutes, he

\* This pamphlet, *Preparing for Marriage*, deals in detail with sexual adjustment. It can be purchased for 25¢ from the American Institute of Family Relations, 5287 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles 27, California. A Spanish translation is also available.

thought he had been educated for marriage! It took some time for us to force him to unlearn what he had learned. After he started with a more correct idea of normal feminine human nature, there was no further trouble on the part of his wife.

Wallace and Ruthellen presented another common picture. They had been married a little more than a year. Almost from the outset, they reported, they established a sexual adjustment which they thought was ideal; and now they were losing it. Occasionally the old perfection, the mutual satisfaction, would be obtained; then it would be missed for several weeks. What had happened?

There was no mystery about that. They met through employment in a government bureau in Washington. Ruthellen kept her job after marriage, and both were working at high pressure all day. In the evening, Ruthellen tried to take on an additional job in her homemaking while Wallace went to night school to prepare himself for advancement. They were simply burning their candle at both ends—and it *didn't* make a lovely light. They were constantly overtired and irritable. In addition, the illness of Ruthellen's mother had been a cause of expense and anxiety. It is not surprising that sexual adjustment or any other delicate psychic balance should be disturbed by such conditions.

As luck would have it, they were about to take their annual vacation. "That is all you need to 'cure' you," I promised, and they found it true. On their return they lightened the load they were carrying and lived a more normal life in every way.

K. C. Jones represented a more difficult problem. The neatly typed letter asked for an urgent and immediate appointment. I wrote Mr. Jones suggesting that he phone us. Next day a woman's voice over the wire announced, "This is K. C. Jones, who wrote you yesterday."

I asked her to come right down to the office and meanwhile I let my imagination play. Men often sign merely by their initials, women rarely. Married or single, the woman uses her first name. Why? Perhaps it is partly because the first name means more to a woman than to a man. It is the only *permanent* name she has—the only name she expects to keep from baptism until death. If she imitates men by using initials and concealing her first name, it may be that she wants strangers to think she is a man. In that case,

she can't be well pleased with her own personality. "It will be interesting to find out what this female Casey Jones is up to," I told myself.

When she arrived Kathryn Cornelia (as she finally admitted herself to be) presented little appearance of masculinity save in a suggestion of aggressiveness. That was worth taking into account, however, because it represents the greatest average difference in behavior of American men and women—the men more aggressive, the women less so. The difference goes way back into the lower animals. Moreover, from one point of view sexual intercourse represents an act of aggression on the part of the man, an act of submission on the part of the woman. If a woman is, in this respect, not submissive but aggressive, she is out of her role. If she is very submissive, almost any ordinary man is more aggressive than she. But if she is highly aggressive, she may have difficulty in finding a partner who is even more aggressive; and in that event she may have difficulty in attaining sexual satisfaction.

Personality tests which we gave to K. C. revealed an attitude toward life which was not merely aggressive but dominating, critical, and somewhat unsympathetic.

She had taught school for six years but was unhappy in the job. Her principal was a man who couldn't treat any woman fairly, she alleged. She quit to marry a man three years younger than herself and with a good deal less formal schooling. He was a decent sort of fellow but you would hardly call him masterful. The two of them got along pretty well in most ways, at the outset; but she was entirely frigid. She insisted that this must be all his fault and her continual criticism of him, growing out of this situation, was causing an increased general hostility.

Any reader will guess that there were numerous and profound emotional difficulties involved in this marriage. One of them, which I had suspected from the signature of her first letter, was her inherent dislike for being a woman. This derived from experiences in early childhood which made her think it a misfortune to be born a girl. She wished that she were a man, instead; she always resented her own sex.

A wife's response to her husband in sexual intercourse is a way of saying, "I am a woman. You are my husband. I love you." The

normal wife glories in all three of these thoughts. Not so K.C.J. Since the first thought was repugnant to her, the other two did not follow naturally. At the time when her femininity was uppermost in her consciousness, she felt obliged unconsciously to fight all the harder against admitting it. She refused to surrender.

It would have been a hard job, at best, to redirect her emotional attitudes when they were of such long standing and had colored her entire personality so profoundly. But we were never given a chance to try. She wanted us to "work on her husband." When we insisted on her own active cooperation, she rebelled so strongly as to support the suspicion that she knew herself to be at fault. "The woman—always the woman!" she exclaimed theatrically. "Whatever men do, women get the blame." She dropped us at once, and a little later I saw the announcement of her divorce suit. She charged sexual incompatibility.

No two cases are alike but few of them, fortunately, are as difficult as that presented by K. C. Jones. Most of the frigidity among wives (and of the impotence or partial impotence among husbands as well) could be prevented by proper education before marriage, though this education might have to begin with the parents.

A good deal of the frigidity can be avoided by even a moderate amount of effort to get a little specialized education just before entering into matrimony. There are now many good books and pamphlets available to everyone. On the other hand, some of this literature may be useless or even harmful for one of four reasons:

- (1) Some of it deals so largely with abnormalities and perversions that it confuses the average young person.
- (2) Some of it is so vague and general that it is not applicable.
- (3) Some of it is what might be called mechanistic, treating sexual adjustment as if it were mainly a limited mechanical problem. This is by no means the most important part of the story. A real sexual adjustment is the adjustment of two entire personalities.
- (4) Some of it is what might be called perfectionist. It sets up a standard which few will attain or need to attain. I am sometimes consulted, for instance, by a couple who are really enjoying a perfect sex life but who think there is something the matter with them because husband and wife do not reach an orgasm simulta-

neously. As a fact, simultaneous orgasm is hardly a standard occurrence, and sometimes not desirable.

Various surveys have shown that at any one time one fourth, or even one third, of the married population is not satisfactorily adjusted sexually. In some instances this maladjustment is not felt by them to affect their happiness, but since it is always an element of at least potential weakness in marriage, it should not be allowed to continue indefinitely without attention. It could be assumed that the human race must be, by nature, well adapted to mating, and the fact that some 70 per cent of all marriages, even without much assistance, reach a satisfactory sexual adjustment is proof that there is no great natural difficulty to be faced.

Much more nearly typical than the case of K. C. Jones is that of Philip and Polly. My acquaintance with them started with the latter, who paid me an unexpected call one morning.

"Phil and I were married a year ago on New Year's Day," she began. "We consider ourselves perfectly matched except for one thing, but we have a very serious emotional problem in that one thing. We bought a book on sex technique but it hasn't helped me."

"What else have you tried?"

"Hot douches, but they did no good. My sister said I ought to go to a physician and he would give me some electrical treatments."

"That might be advisable in special cases," I demurred, "but in general it doesn't seem to us to be a logical procedure. The capacity to respond sexually has been so important to the race for millions of years that it must be very deeply rooted in human nature—as much so, for instance, as the capacity to weep, which is less important. There are not many persons who lack completely the ability to shed tears. If this sexual response, this very fundamental mechanism, isn't operating in a woman, it is usually because her emotional 'set' prevents it. The latter is the cause; frigidity is merely the symptom. If a physician wants permanent results he doesn't treat the symptom—he treats the cause. The more you focus attention on your reproductive system, by electrical treatment or local applications, the more you keep the

symptom in your mind and therefore intensify it. Let's look for a cause first."

There was nothing abnormal about Polly and Phil. They were just an average—or, in many ways, far better than average—young couple. Like most of us, they had been exposed to a lot of undesirable influences, which in Polly's case had been unpleasantly cumulative. From a great mass of detail I cite three episodes as representative.

In the first place, when she was of kindergarten age she and a boy who lived next door had tried to get some sex education out in the garage by exploring each other and comparing notes. Her mother had discovered them and had turned a harmless episode into a harmful one. Polly could not remember what her mother said, but she could never forget the latter's incoherent alarm, her excited weeping and scolding, her subsequent warnings and watchfulness. They built up in the child's mind the idea that there was something peculiarly vile about sex.

In the second place, Goldie had done her no good. Goldie was a classmate in high school, a girl from a broken home and a sordid background, who attracted attention by her dirty stories and innuendoes. Pretty soon word was passed around that Goldie was going to have a baby and didn't know who its father was. She disappeared from school, but the associations she had made with sex remained in Polly's mind.

Finally, as a freshman in college Polly had attended a series of lectures on sex, given by an elderly spinster whose intentions were good and execution deplorable. The speaker painted a lurid picture of the natural depravity of the male sex and the great advantages which a girl would derive from keeping as far as possible from all males. Even a wedding ring did not take off the curse: One of her pet aphorisms was that "Many a marriage is nothing but legalized lust."

With such a background, Polly had married. She was head over heels in love. She wanted nothing more than to be a complete wife. But her mind had been poisoned. *Consciously*, she wanted to give herself completely to her husband. *Unconsciously*, she held back.



In short, her personality was trying to go in two different directions at once. It was our job to put her together, so to speak; to prevent different parts of her personality from fighting each other; to reconcile her old fear of all men with her new love for her man.

This process continued through many weeks. As the inner conflict lessened she began to relax all over. She stopped worrying. She took it for granted that she should have required some time to live down the effects of early attitudes. She regarded it as inevitable that she would live them down successfully. When she gained insight into the cause of her frigidity, she also gained confidence that it must disappear in time; and it did.

"This all seems so unnecessary," she exclaimed at our last interview. "Of course I'm overjoyed to have it all straightened out; but why does such a thing have to happen to a supposedly intelligent girl from a so-called good home?"

"Theoretically, it doesn't," I countered. "Conditions are improving each year as schools, churches, and community organizations give more and better help to young people looking toward marriage. But civilization will never be perfect, and neither will human nature. Some women are more sensitive to harmful influences—more sensitive to everything in fact—than others. You are one of them. Your make-up is such that you were upset by influences which might have bounced off a girl who was really tough-minded, as William James called it.

"But let me ask you this: In the light of your own experience, what are you going to do for your own daughters?"

"I hope your implication is correct," she laughed. "Phil says we're going to have five sons. He's always wanted to be manager of a basketball team."

"Four daughters and you would also make an active quintet."

"In that case," she thought aloud, "I'm going to try hard to let them get the right perspective. I'm going to head them, from birth, toward happy marriage. I'm going to keep that goal before them all the time.

"I'm going to help them to understand sex in that light—not as something evil and fearful, certainly not as something trivial and episodic, but as something normal, wholesome, and very desirable. Something too valuable to be wasted. Something to be conserved

and invested for life long happiness in their own homes. And I hope they'll all get the best husbands in the world—but they won't find another as good as Phil."

### WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT SEX?

1. When you asked "where do babies come from?" your parents did not reply, "You're too young to talk about such things." They were frank and encouraging.
2. You enjoy a dance as much as you enjoy going to a meeting of the League of Women Voters.
3. People would be likely to think of you as "distinctly feminine."
4. You did less than the average amount of "heavy petting" during adolescence.
5. You think that the marriage of your own parents was one of the happiest you ever knew.
6. You are fond of children and would like to be the mother of several.
7. You would prefer to marry a man with a personality at least as strong as your own, whom you could not easily dominate.
8. You have never wished that you had been born a boy.
9. You have had close friendships with several men.
10. You have a great many other interests in life besides men.

Recent studies indicate that the woman to whom the above statements apply would be likely to have an unusually sound emotional attitude toward sex, which would lead to a satisfactory sexual adjustment in marriage. Few women could score 100 per cent on this rating. If you qualify on less than half these counts, however, it is time to get some re-education, seek a more normal social life, and improve your grade.

# 19

## *Aggressiveness Can Wreck Romance*

SERGEANT M. is home from the war and, for his wife, home is not what it used to be.

"He orders me around as if I were a detail," Mrs. M. complains. "He lectures me as if I were a public meeting. He's always demanding his rights. I guess every woman wants a strong, dependable husband; but he's like a boy wanting to show off his strength. Is there any way to tame him?"

The Army can't be blamed entirely for the sergeant's disposition, although it may have provided opportunity for some undesirable aspects to come to light. This neurotic type of aggressiveness usually goes back to childhood and often results from a feeling of frustration.

Investigation shows that M. came from a broken home. He never could depend on his parents. His basic needs for love and security were not met. His feelings of disappointment and frustration created an emotional struggle inside of him. He began to demand attention, and to do all sorts of things to get it. He has not yet outgrown this experience.

Mrs. J., who is also overaggressive, did not come from a broken home, but she was the youngest of four girls. She always felt pushed around by her sisters, she was condemned to wear hand-me-down clothing, she found herself excluded from activities which the older ones could enjoy. She formed the habit of "fighting for her rights" and she has continued this habit for the succeeding thirty-one years. In the clubs and organizations to which she belongs, she is always bringing in a minority report; and she has

twice led movements to get rid of the minister of her church and "put a better man in his place."

Mr. L. has a still different background. He grew up in a home that had seen better days and refused to admit it.

His clothes compared unfavorably with those of his associates. He did not have the spending money that other boys in his class had. His mother was always trying to keep up appearances, and she wangled him into many situations where he was out of place.

The anxieties which he developed at that time seem to have marked his whole life. He shows his aggressiveness now by lavish spending (he insists on paying for all the treats), by a garish taste in neckties, and by a continuous and conspicuous attempt not merely to keep up with the Joneses, but to put them in the shade.

But this childhood frustration is not the whole story. Presumably the rabbit is frustrated more often than the lion, but it is the latter, not the former, which becomes aggressive. Constitution therefore plays an important part.

Of two children exposed to similar conditions one will become aggressive, and the other will not, depending on their original make-up. Boys become aggressive more frequently than girls do—in fact, surveys show this to be the most conspicuous and characteristic difference in the behavior of the two sexes. When a woman is overaggressive, it is sometimes because she is unconsciously trying to be a man!

Neither constitution nor childhood experience is the whole story, however, for the degree of aggressiveness is also associated with the satisfaction derived, rather than with the mere degree of frustration.

Adolf Hitler is commonly and correctly cited as an example of aggression contributed to by early frustration. Such experiences of frustration may start him on a career of aggression (although if his constitution had been different they might have led to some other result); but once he feels himself securely in the saddle, once he begins to *enjoy* the exercise of aggression, he is conditioned into even stronger aggression. In other words, he is now *less* frustrated, but *more* aggressive; and the more he enjoys the experience of aggression, the more he desires an increase of the experience.

In childhood, aggressiveness furnishes a difficult problem for

parents, teachers, and the neighbors. In the adult, it is a great handicap to getting along with people, whether in employment, in social life, in courtship, or in marriage. It too often develops into a hardness, a bossiness, a tyrannical selfishness, a tendency to unfair attack, which will keep its possessor (as well as the bystanders) in hot water continually.

Individuals of such extreme and unwholesome self-assertiveness are likely to be conceited, overbearing, prone to talk loudly and boastfully and to criticize others caustically. They play to the grandstand; they demand flattery and flourish on it; they bully the weaklings.

One of the disadvantages of aggressiveness in marriage is that the partner is always so conveniently at hand, to be attacked! The overaggressive woman wants to boss someone, and her husband is the natural victim. Perhaps the children then follow suit. Thomas Henry Huxley used to say facetiously, "I'm not only hen-pecked, but chicken-pecked!"

Even if the husband is by nature easily dominated, he is likely to turn once in a while and create an unexpected scene. On the other hand, if the husband is the overaggressive one, the wife will be bullied and browbeaten. Everyone can cite illustrations from his own acquaintance. But the cure is no different in marriage than outside.

Experience of all psychologists shows that, while an individual's aggressiveness may be increased, the attempt to reduce it is a hard and thankless one. The first step is to understand *why* it exists. Such an understanding will at least help others to avoid adopting measures that will make it worse rather than better.

What can an overaggressive person do to make himself pleasanter to live with? There are various expedients which may be tried. A little experimentation should show whether they are helpful:

1. *Get a Physical Outlet.* Boxing, wrestling, bag punching, tennis, bowling—active and competitive sports in general may furnish some outlet for the aggressive tendencies.

2. *Get a Social Outlet.* This is most desirable. Turn the aggressiveness constructively against conditions (not persons!) that need to be improved. A lot of real accomplishment in the world is the

result of aggressive tendencies directed into useful channels. Any community is fortunate to have a few intelligent persons who, although highly aggressive, are also social-minded and influential enough to arouse public opinion against wrongdoing and injustice.

Check yourself on the accompanying test. If you rate high in aggressiveness it will probably not be news to you—what many people have said to you probably will have led you to suspect it! But looking at yourself in a mirror of this sort will help you to accept the facts.

Then pick out some condition in the community that needs improvement, and go after it. It may be housing conditions, sanitation of restaurants, care of the poor (whether sick or well), denial of justice in the courts to those who lack influence, absence of special educational facilities for the very bright or the very stupid, lack of recreational facilities through which young men and young women can meet and find desirable life partners, or failure of the schools and colleges to educate their students for marriage and parenthood.

It may be any one of a hundred things, more local and specific or more general, than the foregoing. It's for you to decide whether your aggressiveness shall make you a public nuisance or a public benefactor.

If we could get hold of Sergeant M., who started this discussion, we should try at once to find an appropriate job for him, quite apart from the electrical installation by which he will again have to make his living. Perhaps he ought to take the local lead in organizing the veterans of World War II in a campaign to promote durable peace. Perhaps black markets and profiteering would be good targets for his sharpshooting. Perhaps he ought to run for election to the city council, on a platform demanding improvement of race relations—he was in Europe long enough to see what race prejudice and race hatred may mean. He's out of the Army now, but he's still full of fight. If we can get him into a man-sized scrap in his own county, he'll have his hands so full that he'll be glad to come back to his own home in the evenings as to an oasis of peace and harmony.

3. *Develop More Desirable Attitudes and Habits.* My colleague, Dr. Roswell H. Johnson, who has done a great deal of

research on the measurement of aggressive tendencies, suggests the following as a starter:

(a) Be more patient. Wait for others to get their chance in making suggestions or taking part in group activity.

(b) Be more fair. Let spouse, partner, son, or daughter have an opportunity to make a few of the decisions.

(c) Be less cocksure. Accept criticisms and suggestions willingly; if they are not worth anything, at least they did not cost you anything! Spend less time in telling people, more time in learning from them.

(d) Be less propagandistic. Not only does it make you disliked, but it tends to make you overcritical of others and not sufficiently critical of yourself.

(e) Be less persistent and exacting. Remember that it is not your whole duty (nor that of anyone else) to do everything immediately and to perfection. Take it easy!

In short, watch yourself; catch yourself; and you'll get through life much more pleasantly and profitably.

### HOW AGGRESSIVE ARE YOU?

1. Although you much prefer the ocean to the mountains, you are anxious to visit Yosemite in order to be able to tell people that you have been there.
2. In matters of discipline, you pride yourself on being hard-boiled.
3. If you were elected to the bench as a judge, you would insist on everyone showing full respect for the importance of the position, and you would be prompt to sentence offenders for contempt of court.
4. You would be pleased to think that people spoke of you as a "go-getter."
5. If you joined a discussion on the proper postwar treatment of Japan, you would immediately express your own opinion forcibly and make a great effort to convert the others to your way of thinking.

6. You would rather have a business of your own, in which you could be your own boss, than to make considerably more money by taking orders from someone else.
7. Your opinions on politics and religion are quite different from those of your parents.
8. If you tackle even an unimportant job, it is a matter of pride with you to stick to it until it is finished—no matter how much trouble or inconvenience is involved.
9. You pride yourself on your willingness to assume responsibility—even if you are sometimes inwardly uncertain of your fitness for the particular responsibility.
10. When you are defeated it is hard for you to avoid showing your disappointment.

Anyone who answers a majority of these affirmatively is probably to be regarded as on the aggressive side. He should check up on himself from time to time and make sure that he is handling this aggressiveness constructively, along the lines indicated in the accompanying chapter.



## *What a Wife Can Learn from the "Other Woman"*

"WHY she's nothing—absolutely nothing!" Mrs. D. reports disgustedly. She has just seen "the other woman," and she is both indignant and bewildered.

It is nearly a year now that she has distrusted her husband. Mr. D. owns several super-service stations in different parts of the city, and when he began to keep irregular hours and come home late every night he had a plausible story: "I have to watch the boys, or else unregistered gasoline sales will drain me dry." His wife rather suspected that he was staying downtown to play poker, but as he had not cut her ample allowance, she ignored it.

Then came the anonymous letter.

It would be useless to tackle him without conclusive evidence. How would she get it? Detectives? No—too much publicity. She'd do this job herself. She would represent herself as a canvasser and, once gaining an entrance to the apartment, she would denounce the serpent scornfully, heap abuse on her, or appeal to her nobility of character to refrain from breaking up a happy home—according to circumstances.

Carrying a jar of "Lady Lovely" cold cream from her dressing table, as credentials, Mrs. D. knocked at the apartment door. It was opened slightly by a faded creature wrapped in a faded negligee who said in a faded voice, "I don't care for any," and promptly closed it again.

Mrs. D. was still in a daze when she talked with me the next day. "It doesn't make sense," she asserted. "That creature"—and

I could see her mentally comparing herself in an imaginary mirror and noting with approval her own good grooming, her well-tailored lines, her carefully planned color harmonies. "There's something very mysterious about this," she went on. "Do you suppose my husband has become a dope addict, or a degenerate; or is she blackmailing him somehow? He has always admired smart women, and that creature. . . ." Words again were inadequate.

Nothing is harder, in many instances of this sort, for the wife to accept than the fact that "the other woman" is so inferior. If her husband became infatuated with the Queen of Sheba, she might be able to understand. When she sees the other woman—and her curiosity usually will not let her rest until she has done this at any cost—she is baffled, as was Mrs. D., by the discovery that her rival has not succeeded by being irresistibly young and seductively glamorous. She naturally falls back on the explanation that "that creature" is exerting some mysteriously malignant influence, or else that her husband has become a "degenerate." By thus trying to ignore the real significance of the episode, she misses the opportunity to gain information, which she needs to make herself a good wife, and to transform the marriage from at least temporary failure to permanent success.

Of course the other woman is likely to be inferior in some obvious ways. A superior woman is not interested. If the woman herself is the aggressor, she is likely to be trying to improve her own situation, and she has little to gain by going after a man who is her own inferior. If the man is mainly responsible for the situation, it is usually necessary to his self-esteem that he feel himself superior. Beyond this, some psychologists have speculated that if the husband is dissatisfied with his wife, he unconsciously finds it pleasant to humiliate and degrade her by saying to her in effect, "You can see what I think of you, if I find even this wretched creature more attractive than you are!"

But though she may be inferior to the wife herself in many conspicuous ways, the other woman is evidently offering the man *something* that the wife has not given. It is not a mere matter of intensity of competition, as is sometimes supposed—not simply the result of the other woman's playing up to him, flattering him, doing more for him. She may not even be treating the man as well

as his wife does. In extreme cases she may be bullying him, insulting him, humiliating him. But in all cases she is probably meeting some unfilled emotional need on his part. If the wife is smart enough, or if she has skilled help, she can learn what this need is which she has failed to meet. She can then either fill it herself or try to build her husband up emotionally so that the need no longer exists.

In attempting to do this, she must recognize that the husband frequently does not know, consciously, what he is seeking. Nor does the other woman, in many instances: she may be just as much surprised that this man has become interested in her, she may be just as much puzzled to know *why* he finds her attractive, as is the wife. But if the wife can be objective enough to think over, first, what *any* man is entitled to get in marriage, and, second, what this particular man has failed to get in his marriage to her, she may not have far to go before she discovers that she had done less than her share to make the marriage a success.

The argument would be essentially the same if the situation were reversed—if the wife rather than the husband were involved with the other corner of the triangle. To save the trouble of juggling the personal pronouns back and forth I'll continue to assume that it is the husband who is delinquent—who has gone elsewhere in the attempt to satisfy some emotional need. This need may be more or less legitimate, or it may be more or less illegitimate. Without trying to draw any straight lines—since human motives are always so mixed—let's consider them in these two groups. A few illustrations will remind the reader of the frequency with which wives fail to satisfy even the most legitimate needs of their spouses.

Mr. A. married a woman superior to himself in most ways. She was a librarian, had passed the age when there was any choice of partners, but was desperately anxious to marry. Mr. A. was several years younger, with much less schooling, and not conspicuously successful in business. "I know he's not good enough for me," she told her friends frankly. But it was that or nothing, and she wanted a home.

Consciously as well as unconsciously, she made him feel inferior. He was not the kind of man to fight it out, and if he had

tried he would have lost the battle. He accepted his inferior position meekly, because that was his nature; but he turned to Ellen, who worked in the little bakery on the corner, where he stopped almost every night to bring home fresh bread. She was an orphan whose schooling had ended in the seventh grade. In her eyes Mr. A. was the kind of man that he wanted to be in his own eyes. When his wife edited and revised his jokes, Ellen giggled delightedly at them. When his wife corrected his grammar Ellen simply smiled admiringly, "My, how you can talk!" When his wife scoffed at his comments on international affairs, Ellen asked him earnestly for information as to what Russia would do. Gradually he came to spend a great deal more time with Ellen than in his own home.

When Mrs. A. discovered what was happening, her first impulse was to "lay him out" and then throw him out. Her second impulse was to protect her own pride and deprive the Business and Professional Woman's Club of a choice morsel of gossip. The second impulse was strong enough to make her stop, look, and listen. Just because she really was a superior woman, a woman of intelligence, it was possible to get her to see that she was quite as responsible as was her husband for what had happened. It was even possible for her to revise her own tactics so as to make him a real part of the marriage. She found new interests for the two of them in which he would appear to advantage. She learned to consult him and show a courteous respect for his ideas. She never allowed him to suspect that she knew of his deviation, but she began to fill their evenings with interesting activities, to bring in people whom he admired, and to plan little trips away from home with him—always so skillfully that he thought he was planning them himself. She also began to buy her bread from a man who came to the door! Within a year Ellen had dropped out of sight so far as the A. family was concerned, and the marriage was on a sound foundation, which it had previously lacked.

Mr. B., on the other hand, married below himself. Stationed in a small English town for 19 months, and greatly bored, he married a girl who worked in the local pub. She was a healthy, good-natured creature with a pretty face and an I.Q. of 100. To her, it was "like living in a storybook" to come to America with this

young man, the only son of a well-to-do family, but from the day of her arrival she was out of place. Mr. B. provided for her financially and otherwise ignored her most of the time. He began to appear in public with a flashy woman, already twice divorced, who helped to write the advertising for a large department store.

Their common religious affiliation, one of the things (along with a Scandinavian ancestry) which had brought Mr. and Mrs. B. together, discouraged divorce but it also gave the wife her chance. With the aid of a counselor she started to make herself a suitable partner for her husband. She would never be really his equal, but that was no handicap. The average man does not marry a woman who is really his equal. Statistically speaking, he marries a woman who is inferior to himself in almost every trait that can be measured—inferior in size and age, inferior in intelligence and in formal schooling, inferior in social position. This is not wholly his fault; it is largely because of women's strong—and laudable—determination to improve their own position when they marry. If a girl succeeds, as she is determined to do, in marrying a man slightly above her own level, the inescapable consequence is that the man will marry a girl who is slightly below his own level! Both of them are satisfied, provided the discrepancy is not too great.

Mrs. B. took tutoring in speech, social usage, dress, and make-up; she joined a current events class and a group that was learning how to speak in public. She attended the book reviews and began to identify herself actively with some of the church organizations. The fact that she was financially able to do these things was of course a great help. A girl who had to be self-supporting could have relied upon free classes in the evening high school and similar community resources, but it might have taken more time.

As she felt more sure of her ground, Mrs. B. began to draw her husband into some of the church activities. Her pastor, in whom she had confided, was a great help in having Mr. B. drafted for various chores in which it was customary for the men to bring their wives. Gradually Mr. B. began to realize that his own wife was respected and admired by everyone; that she was an unselfish girl without pretense or pose, and a good listener. Simultaneously the divorcee, who was too adolescent to stay with any one man for more than a year, began to cultivate an ace who had just been released

from the Navy after a distinguished career in the South Pacific. There is no longer any doubt as to the permanence of the B.'s marriage.

Mr. C. had a frigid wife to whom sex was something evil and disgusting. "I suppose I can put up with it," she had told a friend before marriage. "One has to pay a price for everything, and that is the price a woman has to pay for a home." But after marriage, she often felt that the price was too high. Mr. C. naturally wanted a partner with a more normal outlook on life, and he drifted back to a girl he had known before marriage.

When she confronted him with the evidence, he was defiant. She threatened divorce. "A woman can't get a divorce from a man unless she is his wife," he retorted. "You're not so simple-minded as to believe that you are really a wife, are you?"—and he walked out of the house. She rushed to a lawyer who, on learning the facts, referred her to a marriage counselor. She was advised to ignore the existence of the other woman, to make no further reference to the matter in dealing with her husband, but to concentrate intensively on her own re-education. Within a few months she was a successful wife.

Mr. D. with whose case I began this commentary, wanted to feel that he had a real partner—one who valued him for himself as well as for his bank account; one who was interested in his well-being and not merely in what she could get out of him to promote her own social ambitions. The faded creature in the apartment house was far from an ideal partner, but she was continually worrying about him, trying to do things for him, considering his comfort and asking nothing—refusing to accept anything in return. She would not exploit him, while his own wife, Mr. D. concluded, had no interest in him except to exploit him for her own benefit. Perhaps he was as much to blame for this as she, but the situation had really become intolerable, and Mrs. D. was the first to admit it when she faced the facts by telling them to a counselor. She had little difficulty in reorganizing the pattern of the marriage. After all, the wife holds most of the cards. If she loses the game, it is usually not because she did not hold a winning hand, but because she had not learned to play her cards properly.

Without justifying their actions in any way, one must recognize

that the four men described had legitimate needs which were not being met in their marriages. They could have saved themselves trouble by taking more intelligent action to meet these needs; but the unintelligent action which they took resulted, in each case, in the wife being shocked into more intelligent action on her own account.

Frequently, however, the case is less simple. The needs which the husband is trying to satisfy are not legitimate, but neurotic. For instance:

Mr. E. needed someone to make a fuss over him. An only child, he had been brought up by a widowed mother who was extremely demonstrative. Perhaps one of the reasons why he married Jean was that she was so matter-of-fact. She was a change from his mother. As the children came along, she was absorbed in them and paid even less attention to her husband. When he intimated that he liked to be fussed over a little, she intimated that he was not a child. But she was mistaken. He still was a child; he had not built up enough adult masculinity and self-sufficiency to see him through. A woman who worked for him began to mother him and make a fuss over him. He encouraged it. Pretty soon she was The Other Woman.

It was not easy for Mrs. E. to make herself be more demonstrative, to lavish a little affection on her husband: "Do you expect me to treat him like a baby?" she demanded. But she was finally convinced that this was a necessary and, *for the time being*, a legitimate expectation; and it was coupled with measures to help him grow up emotionally. They are coming closer to each other, and will eventually meet somewhere near the adult level.

Mr. F., brought up by a strong and determined mother, needed to be dominated. He craved a partner who would guide him with a firm hand. His wife looked to her husband for guidance; so they were two clinging vines with nothing to cling to. Their sexual adjustment was unsatisfactory to both, because each wanted the other to be more aggressive.

They rented their home from a determined widow whom he saw more and more frequently, at first on business, later because it secretly pleased him to have her denounce him and order him around. The situation soon became one of exploitation on her

part, a neurotic subjugation on his. He had no desire to give up his wife, and he himself did not understand why he seemed so ready to allow the widow to impose on him. His wife gave him an ultimatum: "Choose between us. You can't have both." Naturally, he chose his wife; naturally, he couldn't resist the other woman. The wife came to get confirmation of her opinion that the situation was hopeless. "I've given him every chance," she argued, "he deliberately violates every promise he makes to me."

She was persuaded that she had an obligation in the matter: her husband needed help, and she was the only possible influence that could make him accept the kind of help he needed. The two of them started a process of counseling which, in the case of the husband, is continuing after three years—he drops in every month or two to report and check up on himself. At first Mrs. F. resented the idea that she must accept, for a while, a more aggressive role. "It isn't womanly," she urged—and she was right. But she finally agreed that it was proper to meet her husband's strong, though illegitimate, emotional need, provided he was cooperating at the same time in the process of getting rid of that need. They are working out a more reciprocal pattern and will end with a fifty-fifty partnership.

Mr. G., on the contrary, just had to feel that he was boss. He was under an inner compulsion to assert himself, particularly by dominating women. He had not succeeded in dominating his clever and attractive wife. She had the steering wheel firmly in her own hands. "I thought I was doing him a favor," she exclaimed, as she related how she had taken off his shoulders the responsibility for everything possible, so he would be free to give all his thought to his profession. "And we're perfectly mated sexually," she continued. When she gradually realized that he was becoming promiscuous, sexually, she could not believe the evidence—"It just doesn't make sense." There was no one other woman in his life, but a lot of other women, pickups of the most casual, and sometimes the most sordid, kind.

These represented, very largely, a satisfaction of Mr. G.'s deep inner need to feel that he was dominating women. They reflected a profound inner sense of insecurity which had to be reassured in some way. This was the way he had adopted; and it was not



satisfactory to anyone concerned. The solution was not a divorce, but an understanding of his need and the satisfaction of this need in more legitimate ways, pending the gradual change that was desirable in his personality.

Mrs. G. learned quickly enough to give up "running things." She began to put more responsibility on him, to praise him for the way he accepted it, to find innumerable opportunities for him to make decisions and to feel proud of himself. She learned to adopt a seductive and provocative role, sexually, which made him continually admire himself for the way he was able to make a conquest—of his own wife! Gradually he became more sure of himself; he no longer needed to bolster his confidence by pickups in cocktail lounges. And his wife is better pleased with herself, too. "I don't know why I ever wanted to wear the pants," she commented. "I guess the only answer is that I didn't know I was wearing them. But it's really a lot more fun to be a woman!"

Mr. H. was trying to punish his wife for the sins of her whole sex. He felt strongly (and it was a mere feeling, not conscious rationalization) that he had been held down too much in his own childhood—not only by his mother, but also by many other women who had supervised his training and education. The whole female sex had done him wrong when he was not in a position to stand up for his rights. But now he was in a position to get even with the whole crowd! Symbolically, his wife was merely the whipping girl to expiate the supposed sins of his mother, his Sunday School teacher, and so on down the line. And the way to put his wife in her place was to put another woman in her place. It was a perfect revenge on the whole female sex! When his wife understood *why* he was behaving in this apparently senseless way, she was able to face the situation and gradually help him find his way out.

The fact that Mr. X., Y., or Z. has a deep unfilled need does not entitle him, as a citizen, to have it filled. Many a man has a deep emotional need to get drunk. The treatment is not to give him a case of whisky. It is, first, to recognize the nature of the need. Then one must treat the cause, not the symptom. Similarly when a wife finds that there is another woman in her husband's life, her first action should be not to treat the symptom, but to find the

cause—to find what this other woman really means to her husband; and then remove the cause. It's the easiest way, often the only way, to remove the very conspicuous and annoying symptom which is the Other Woman.

## *Handling the Family Finances*

THEY'RE not getting much fun out of life, Mr. and Mrs. Z. admit. They really don't get what they want, and yet they spend a lot of money. They spend more than they have, in fact. The budget never balances.

They are happily married but unhappily worried. "Bob gets a good salary," Mrs. Z. says, "but we just can't keep up with rising prices." "Marguerite is a good manager," Mr. Z. declares. "I guess it's all my fault. I really don't know where the money goes."

No, they don't make a budget. Tried it a dozen times, though. Never seemed to work. Too many extras or unusual expenditures—can't be helped—no budget seems to fit.

That's what they all say!

A budget can be taken much too seriously, but some families don't take it seriously enough. Here are some practical steps to take—not *mañana* but today:

1. Be businesslike and cheerful as you make your plan, not rebellious and embittered. Choose a time when everyone is calm. A budget, born of a brawl, has a bitter birth and often small chance for survival.

2. Decide what you want most out of life, the long-range things and the immediate.

3. In your figures use minimum income and maximum outgo. The increase may not come, the Christmas check may be missing.

4. Live by your own plan—not the neighbors'. Maybe even they can't live by theirs.

5. Draw the entire family into the planning. Stick to discussion,

avoid arguments. Forget the mistakes of past bad spending by any member of the family. You're interested in the present and future, not the past.

6. Expect no overnight miracles. They won't happen. A near miracle may come to you and your family by way of happier living. Give your plan a chance to live; too many plans die a-borning. Your spending plan will help you live a fuller, finer life.

7. Plan to get the best value for all your investments in food, clothing, housing, and home equipment. If you join one of the consumers' organizations which sends out a monthly bulletin on how to buy wisely, you'll probably save the cost of membership many times over each year. The fact that an article is advertised expensively doesn't always mean that it is the best of its kind.

8. Plan for educational development of the whole family. The children are in school, of course; but the schools are neglecting some of the most important parts of their education. Plan to get these in other ways—education in getting along with people, in preparing for marriage and family life, and in planning. But see to it particularly that father and mother are continuing their education through evening classes, through reading, through participation in groups.

9. Plan for individual and family participation in community affairs. Make yours one of the families that has to be counted, whenever public welfare is talked about.

10. Recreation deserves particular thought. This is too often the first item to be cut out of the budget, when money is scarce.

This may be an advantage. During the Great Depression of the 1930's, many a family was strengthened, its members brought closer together, by cutting out expensive and perhaps demoralizing entertainment away from home. The members stayed together in the living room, or around the dining table, and had more fun than before—with a better taste in their mouths next morning!

But cutting down on recreation may also be a very dangerous move, and this worries many a wife who complains, "We just can't afford to entertain, at present prices. We can't afford to go to shows the way some folks do. I don't want our family to get into a rut and the youngsters begin to roam the streets! How do other families meet this problem?"

In three successful ways: through greater use of community resources, through more recreation in their own neighborhood, and by having more fun in their own home. Try all of them.

You'll find in the public library all sorts of handbooks on home and community recreation. One called *Home Play* is put out by the National Recreation Association. If you live in a city, a phone call to the recreation department may be enough to put you in touch with all sorts of facilities for which you, as a taxpayer, have been paying, but which you haven't been using. Start now to get your money's worth.

In some middle-income communities, neighborhood fun has been crippled by getting into the high-cost bracket. Refreshments are so expensive that people have been avoiding entertainment. Often a little cooperative action is enough to get group agreement that nothing more elaborate than punch and cookies shall be served; then people can continue to enjoy life.

Family councils may well consider what they can do in their own homes. Games, art projects, musical "performances," front porch and backyard picnics, gardening, and homemade entertainments can all be inexpensive as well as enjoyable. Perhaps the parents will think back over their own early life and revive some of the good times they had in previous years.

Every family must make some provision for savings, and few of us have had proper training for this purpose.

We've all been told, "Take care of the pennies, and the dollars will take care of themselves," but this is not the whole truth. It's often possible to make some very large economy that will outdo a hundred tiny evidences of thrift. Maybe it's a matter of giving up the family automobile, or dropping out of an expensive club, or leaving a group of acquaintances (for whom you really have no very deep feeling, anyway) that goes in for extravagant entertainment.

Weigh all such items carefully. Life is a matter of choices, of alternatives. You can't have everything. Get what you want most, and be sure you are getting your money's worth.

It is only by such planning that a family can provide security for old age—one of the most important of all family problems and one in which an actual majority fail. Many are like Mr. T., who

came to see me recently. He doesn't expect to be a millionaire—"But I'd like to figure some way so my family wouldn't have to go on the county charities, if anything happened to me."

"But with the present prices," he continued, "we're getting a little behind instead of a little ahead, each month. The newspapers say millions of families are doing the same thing. It's a terrible feeling that I'm not making any provision for my old age, or for the security of my wife and children; but I defy anybody to show me how it can be done now."

Mr. T. is correct: Millions of others are in equally bad shape; and all the experts agree that there is only one way to beat the game. That is, to spend less than you earn—no matter how much or how little that is.

They agree likewise that the only way you can do this is to save your monthly 10 per cent (it shouldn't be less than that), the moment it is received. Have it "deducted at source," if your company handles such matters. Put it in the savings bank with the determination that it won't be touched for any purpose. If your salary is \$50 a week, say to yourself and your family, "I'm not getting \$50, I'm getting \$45 and we'll have to live on \$45."

"This is a bitter and nauseating medicine to take," banker Henry S. McKee agrees, "but it invariably cures, and it is the only cure there is." Unless children learn this lesson at home, they too will have trouble ahead and can look forward to joining the great majority of the population that is dependent on relatives or on public support in old age.

It was James J. Hill, builder of the Northern Pacific Railway, who said, "If you want to know whether you are destined to be a success or not, you can easily find out. The test is simple and infallible. Are you able to save money? If not, you will lose. You may think not, but you will lose as sure as fate, for the seed of success is not in you."

Husband and wife who finish the year with a little more security than they had at the start, no matter how much denial it has involved, will never regret it. But in these times, such a course certainly requires firm determination—no doubt about that.

It has often been pointed out that marriages do not break up on the lack of money, but on failure to agree on the handling of

whatever money there is. One of the commonest of all difficulties is the tendency of the husband to want to control the family pocketbook, to dole out money to his wife, but not to give her a fair share of responsibility. He may not dole it out—he may be liberal rather than penurious, but that does not solve the problem. One of my students, a mature married woman, put the case neatly, I thought, when she wrote: “Many men are generous with their wives financially, but very few men are just with their wives financially.”

“My wife never has to complain of lack of funds,” asserts Mr. W. “All she has to do is to mention the fact, and I give her whatever she needs.”

But since Mrs. W. never knows what she is going to have, she has no reason to try to plan her expenditures wisely. She is likely to ask for more than she really needs, in order to avoid having to go back too soon for more money. Then, having more than she needs for immediate use, she is tempted to spend it on things she sees in the stores—what the merchants call “impulse buying.” The woman who is operating without a budget is the most likely victim for unnecessary impulse buying, and it is easy for Mrs. W. to say to herself, “I hadn’t thought about getting one of those, but maybe I’d better do it before the price goes any higher!”

Mr. and Mrs. Y. have handled things more successfully. “We were astonished,” he reports, “to find that our money was slipping through our fingers every month for items that we couldn’t even remember, while we thought we couldn’t afford more important things. We made up our minds that we would not break into the next paycheck until we had made a definite plan for spending it.

“We spent several evenings making lists of necessary expenditures. Then we went over them again and decided that a few of them really weren’t necessary at all! We lopped those off, got an inexpensive budget book, and went to work with that paycheck.

“After arranging to cover all of our definite expenditures, we gave ourselves each a personal allowance of two dollars a week. We do what we please with this—no questions asked! Actually I’m saving a large part of my little allowance and I think my wife is doing the same; when an emergency occurs, as it always does, we’ll have a little nest egg to produce.

"When I look back on the old days of handing money out to my wife without either of us knowing what it was for, I pat myself on the back and reflect that we are growing smarter all the time!"

Of course some wives stand in their own light, by refusing to be responsible even when their husbands want them to be responsible. I remember Mrs. B., who had an all-sufficient explanation of her marital difficulties: "I never could keep accounts." Mr. B. grew tired of having her disregard the budget and overdraw the bank balance. He finally exploded. He was very unreasonable, Mrs. B. said and continued to insist: "I never could keep accounts." That lets her out.

Borrowing a form of analysis which psychologist Gardner Murphy has used in another connection, let's see what Mrs. B. really means. She considers it merely a statement of fact—"I never could keep accounts."

1. There's the "I," to begin with. Maybe other people can't keep accounts, but they are not important. This is different; it has to do with Me. The important thing is that "I" am the subject, this time. No one else matters.

2. Then the "never." That proves I'm innocent. It's always been like this—maybe a congenital defect! You can't hold me responsible for this. You can't criticize a man for not seeing, when he was born blind. You can't denounce a man for not running faster, when he has been a cripple from birth. I'm not guilty—Fate is to blame. *Never!*

3. The "could" merely repeats this. It's not that I don't want to; it's not as if I am refusing; as if I won't try; as if I am a shirker. "I never could." Blame somebody else, who is deliberately refusing to accept responsibility. But don't blame me—I'm simply obeying the laws of Nature!

4. Finally, "keep accounts." You see, there is just one difficulty—just one thing in the universe which I lack. I may be a superwoman at everything else. I'm right on the job in every other way that you could mention. When I'm so perfect in every other particular it does seem picayunish, doesn't it, to pick on this one exception, this trifle of keeping accounts?

"I never could keep accounts." She'd better begin right now. She'd better start learning today. She has stalled long enough!



Finally, any plan for handling the family finances must take into account the differences in outlook of men and women. *Fortune* concluded a report on different attitudes of men and women toward recreation with the remark that "the results stress the completely different psychological worlds in which men and women seem to operate." No budget can ignore this fact.

Men and women both like to make a show, for example, but they have to do it in different ways.

Mrs. F. forgot this when she was trying to think of things that her husband did and that she disliked. "He's always trying to make a show," she complained. "If we are dining with other people at a restaurant, he tips the waitress twice as much as is necessary. He hands the barber a 25 cent tip—don't you think a dollar is enough for a haircut, without any tip?"

"Customers and barbers don't always look at this in just the same way," I replied cautiously. "You feel that he does this sort of thing just to impress other people—to show off, in short?"

"Of course. And we can't afford it."

"Not to change the subject," I went on, "that's a very attractive hat you're wearing. You don't mind my being personal, do you?"

She looked pleased, but a bit guilty, too. "Everybody admires it," she replied. "I really couldn't afford it, but a woman has to work to keep up appearances. You men can't appreciate that."

"No; we can wear the old hat for two or three years without losing caste. We look at it and say to ourselves, 'It's easily good for one more season.' That sort of thing is not in a woman's vocabulary, is it? As a matter of fact, when you bought this stunning creation, I imagine you already had a hat with a lot of good solid wear left in it?"

She looked at me suspiciously. "I had two or three that looked like they might have been worn to President McKinley's inaugural," she answered.

"Probably your husband was very pleased to have you get this one. He wants you to make a favorable impression on people. It's to his advantage as well as yours."

"Yes, he complimented me on it, too. . . . What are you driving at, Dr. Popenoe? What have my hats got to do with our marital difficulties?"

"Why, I just couldn't help noticing that you had a very becoming hat. Perhaps I shouldn't have mentioned it, but it would impress anyone favorably."

She gave me a long, hard look. "And you thought I was spending money to make a favorable impression, at the same time that I denounced my husband for doing the same thing! Why didn't you say so?"

"I didn't need to," I answered.

## *How a Wife Can "Manage" Her Husband*

As I took my seat in the dining car, a man and a woman came in. The steward looked up. "Are you together?" he inquired.

A quick look of astonishment and alarm passed over the man's face. I suppose he saw visions of all sorts of possible complications. He hesitated an instant and then replied, "We're together, but separate."

Many a marriage gets into that condition. Husband and wife are together, but separate. Usually they recognize that they are separate. No one needs to tell them that. Sometimes they don't want to get closer together. Usually they merely lack the understanding of what to do and how to do it.

"What to do" doesn't mean that they must agree on everything. Perhaps Mrs. Y. has made this mistake. "My husband and I don't seem to have anything in common," she complains. "He disagrees with everything I suggest."

I suppose he would put it the other way around, that Mrs. Y. disagrees with everything he suggests. Perhaps neither one of them has stopped to remember that marriage has to be a matter of give and take. Perhaps neither one of them has stopped to remember that marriage has to change continually—that it must never be allowed to be the same as it was last year or the year before.

She might begin today by examining the things on which he disagrees and picking out two or three of them in which she can let him have his own way without too much discomfort on her part. She dislikes all these things, but probably she dislikes some

of them more than others. She should take a pencil and paper; make a list of all the things, then select three that are least objectionable and say to herself, "I'll go along with him on those three, for the time being. It won't hurt very much!"

In the second place, she can pick out three other things on which the two can agree—there certainly are such things, even if they don't come to mind at once. She can start to emphasize those three, and make all she can out of them.

The third step would be to have him accept a few of her own peculiarities. She can't force those on him; she can't afford even to suggest them; but I think he'll take that third step himself, if she will take the first two steps, honestly, intelligently, and immediately.

Every husband has his peculiarities, and the wife who wants to "manage" him successfully has to follow the same procedure in each case; she must recognize the peculiarities, ask herself how they originated, and in the light of this understanding make a plan to deal with them intelligently. Sometimes the most important thing is to recognize the source of these peculiarities. For instance, Helen's husband has the faults of his virtues.

"What does that mean?" she asks me. "I spent a day with my mother recently. I didn't say anything about it but she must have seen that I wasn't very happy. When I left she said, 'Remember, Helen, you married Rod because he had a lot of conspicuous virtues, and he can't help also having the faults of his virtues.' I'm afraid I don't understand. But she wouldn't have told me that unless she thought it important."

Indeed, it is important—not merely for Helen but for every wife, and every husband. It ought to be borne in mind continually. It means that you can't eat your cake and have it, too.

Not knowing Rod, I can't describe his virtues. From what her mother said, it is evident that he has a lot of them. What faults are tied to them? In one sense, none at all; the faults are in her expectations. Let's stop talking in generalities and get down to cases.

1. Suppose she married him because he was so dependable, so steady, so sure to be just where she expected him to be and doing what he was expected to do. Lots of women would like to have such a husband. Helen has him. But if he is that kind of a

husband, she can't expect him to keep her thrilled by always doing the unexpected! She can't expect him to surprise her by doing something entirely different from what she and he had planned. So she'll have to remember that his reliability is still a virtue and that it has the fault of not lending itself to sudden and unexpected changes—if she considers lack of those a fault in him.

2. Suppose she married him because he was always so cheerful, never tired, rising above any indisposition, seemingly inexhaustible in energy. He'll get things done for her. But it would not be surprising if he failed to understand or sympathize with her tendency to stay in bed when she has a headache, to complain a great deal about the fact that her feet hurt, or to want to give up all activity for three or four days each month.

3. Suppose she married him because he was so generous, showering her with gifts, always doing a little more than she expected when he dated her. It's very pleasant, but she can hardly be astonished now if she finds that he is not accumulating a steady surplus, buying a government bond each month, and helping her to economize on household expenses as the cost of everything goes up.

Girls would save themselves trouble if they would think of these facts before marriage as well as afterward. Boys, similarly, might be helped to recognize that a girl who always wants to be on the go may not be satisfied with staying at home continually as a wife; that a girl who never wants to help her mother with the cooking may not be much interested in cooking for her husband.

To take a different type of problem, Mrs. R. knows, or thinks she knows, what the trouble is. Her husband doesn't need her; so she thinks she has nothing to live for.

"I feel as if he could get along just as well without me," she mourns. "He's self-sufficient. He's wrapped up in his work; sometimes I think he hardly knows whether I'm still alive.

"It's a terrible thing, Dr. Popenoe, a terrible thing for a woman to feel that nobody needs her."

I'll agree with her this far, that everyone of us ought to be so useful in the world that we are needed. But sometimes we have to put the emphasis on being useful rather than on being appre-

ciated. Mrs. R. might start to improve the situation by asking herself, first, what she is really contributing to her husband that he needs and, second, what more she could contribute to be helpful to him. Maybe she can increase her contributions without bankrupting herself.

After she has taken stock in that way, she might go on to consider whether she is doing enough, not for him, but for herself. Maybe she needs to be a little more self-reliant and self-sufficient on her own account.

Lots of us are not very realistic in this matter. We may go off on a tangent in one of two directions. Some of us are always looking for someone to lean on, to cling to. We are always trying to be dependent on someone else.

Others are doing the opposite—they don't want to depend on somebody but are determined that somebody must depend on them. It makes them feel better satisfied, more important, to have someone completely dependent on them.

Neither of these tendencies is an evidence of good emotional health. I don't know that one is any better or worse than the other. My suggestion to Mrs. R. is "Take the middle way. You are a partner in marriage. So is your husband. Partners ought to be walking alongside each other, arm in arm; not one carrying the other on his back! After you have made sure that you are doing everything that you can profitably and usefully do for your husband, begin to do more for yourself. Strike out for that middle way."

Most women do not complain that they are completely ignored by their husbands. They complain of more limited failures. One of the commonest has to do with social life.

In a once popular song, the husband asserted that "I can dance with everybody except my wife." Mr. K. is not in that position, however. He can't, or won't, even dance with his wife.

"He doesn't dance," Mrs. K. laments. "We have made some friends recently who do a great deal of dancing, and he doesn't want to go out with them."

"Did he dance with you before you were married?" I asked Mrs. K.

"No, he has never cared for dancing."

"At least, this isn't anything new. How long have you been married?"

"Fourteen years."

Here's a situation that demands a little more perspective on the part of a wife who is complaining about lack of cooperation from her husband. It might work the other way, too; it might be an equally unnecessary complaint on the part of a husband against his wife. But in the instant case, as the lawyers put it, what possible justification has Mrs. K. for making a fuss?

Her husband has never cared for dancing. Maybe he's wrong or maybe he's right in that preference; but that's his preference. She knew it before she married him. In 14 years he hasn't changed; perhaps she has not tried to change him. Suddenly, after 14 years of marriage, she finds fault with him for not wanting to dance with some friends they are cultivating—or more likely, friends whom she alone is cultivating.

I don't know Mrs. K.'s friends, and I don't know much about her marriage; but anybody would guess that she is not getting as much satisfaction out of marriage as she would like.

She is quite right, then, in wanting to enrich it. But she is starting in the wrong direction, if she intends to drag her husband along by main strength and awkwardness. He would certainly not show up to particular advantage as a dancer, if he hasn't danced during a lifetime of, we'll guess, 40 years. Why not pick out something that he will enjoy doing and in which he will show off to reasonable advantage?

There are certainly a lot of activities in which the two can take part, with satisfaction to both. She may have to find some new friends who don't belong to a dancing set. "Use your imagination; canvass the resources of your city; pick out 15 or 20 things that you would enjoy doing; then narrow these down to three or four things that your husband would also enjoy doing with you; and do them." That would be my suggestion to Mrs. K.

These continual differences of opinion about social life call for frankness and understanding. Another illustration that comes to mind is that of Mr. and Mrs. L. Both of them wanted to go to the party. But Mr. L. thought his wife did not want to go, so he

gallantly said that he preferred to stay at home. Mrs. L. thought her husband wanted to stay at home, so she lovingly declared that she would rather not go.

It was only a week later that each learned, accidentally, that the other had really desired to go, but had sacrificed this desire for the sake of the partner!

"I felt like a fool," Mrs. L. relates. "I'll put it a little more definitely: I was a fool. I suppose he felt a bit ridiculous, too. Anyhow, we then and there agreed that it was possible to be frank and polite and considerate, all at the same time. Now we try to be considerate, but we are also honest about it."

Many a marriage is in trouble because one of the partners won't speak out. Mrs. R. consulted me one day about her own marriage. "For seven years," she complained, "I have been uncomfortable because my husband insists on reading after we go to bed."

"I should think he might do some of his reading elsewhere," I agreed. "What does he say when you speak of it?"

"Oh, I've never once mentioned it to him," she exclaimed. "I didn't want to hurt his feelings."

Isn't this carrying a good idea too far? It would certainly not have been helpful for Mrs. R. to mention the subject 365 times in each of those seven years, and to look forward to making it 366 in leap year. But in seven years she might have mentioned it once, and Mr. R. might have welcomed the information. In fact, when I myself broke the news to him, he was astonished. "Why, I always thought she enjoyed that, too," he replied. "She often said it was a good way to relax before going to sleep. I'll certainly not do so again—it is a matter of no importance to me. Why on earth didn't she say something?"

Nagging might be defined as complaining more than once about something that a complaint won't change. But if a dog is entitled to one bite, as the law says he is, certainly there are some cases in which a wife—or husband—is entitled to one complaint! You can be polite about it, but don't suffer perpetually in silence unless you are absolutely certain that anything except silence would be worse. Forbearance often helps a marriage. Sometimes a little information will help it even more.

Frankness and understanding must be supplemented by a will-



ingness to accept the partner's personality without continual efforts to hammer it into a new pattern. Mr. J. provides an illustration. He is not actually deaf and dumb. "But he might as well be," his wife asserted. "He'll sit all the evening and never make a remark. If I ask a question, he may grunt, but that's about all. You say husband and wife ought to find some topics of conversation together, Dr. Popenoe. What is a wife going to do when her husband won't talk about anything? A marriage on that basis isn't worth much."

"Doesn't sound promising," I agreed. "When other people are present, does he talk to them?"

"Oh, yes, he does his share. He isn't a great talker, but he carries on an intelligent conversation, especially with the men."

"Then it's only when you and he are alone that he goes into the silence this way?"

"Yes. I think he does it just to annoy me."

"And you have tried all sorts of topics, without getting any sign of interest," I pursued.

"I don't know whether a grunt ought to be taken as a sign of interest. . . ."

"What's your husband's occupation?"

"He's a railroad man."

"Well, can't you get him to talk about railroads?"

"Oh, sure; but who wants to spend the evening talking about railroads?"

"I suppose they are interesting to a lot of people," I ventured. "How about politics, sports. . . ."

"Oh, sure, if I were interested in the world's series or the election, he'd be glad to lay down the law to me."

"But you aren't," I affirmed. "Let's take a definite case—last night, for instance. You tried some topics of discussion, without getting him to rise to the bait. What was the bait?"

"I spent the afternoon lengthening an old dress. Had to face the hem with some binding—there wasn't enough material. . . ."

"I get the idea," I interrupted her. "You wanted him to become as enthusiastic about that as you were, and he refused."

Mrs. J. looked a little uncomfortable.

"You reject every topic in which he is interested so he rejects

every topic in which you are interested. Do you see any other way to proceed?"

"I came to have you tell me," she asserted, still a bit stubborn.

"All right, I'll tell you. Sit down each day and make a memorandum of one topic—just one—on which the two of you could converse. When you come again next week, bring me a list of seven such topics."

She hesitated. "Maybe I won't have to come again next week," she remarked.

In other households this lack of understanding, coupled with stubbornness, leads to long, silent feuds that are as childish as they are unprofitable. Sometimes husband and wife will not even speak to each other directly, but carry on conversation in an indirect way, as for example through the dog. When Mr. C. leaves the house he remarks loudly, "Fido, tell your mistress that I won't be home for supper tonight." Mrs. C., not wishing Fido to think that she is failing to include him in her conversation, mutters, "Tell him if he never comes home it will be all right with me, Fido!"

Things had not gone quite that far in the M. household. It was merely a cold war.

"I suppose you might call it a state of armed neutrality," was Mrs. M.'s diagnosis. "I treat my husband as considerately as if he were a guest. He even pecks me dutifully on the cheek, morning and evening. But there's no warmth in our relationship—just common courtesy."

"Reminds me," I remarked, "of the old story about the boy who said, 'Pop's awful mad at Mom tonight—he's being polite to her.'"

"That's exactly it," she concurred. "But life's too short for this sort of thing. How can we stop it?"

"Do you know your history?" I inquired. "Which president of the United States was it who said, 'The way to resume specie payments is to resume?'"

"I never was good at history," she replied. "I only got C in it. I suppose you mean if I want the marriage based on exuberant affection, why don't I just show my husband exuberant affection?"

"Why don't you?"

"I can't forget what he said to me three weeks ago."

"What is it that he can't forget?"

There seemed to be no answer to this question. I waited hopefully, but finally had to try another lead. "If he was wrong and you were right, why don't you apologize and make up?"

"Why don't I apologize? You mean, why doesn't he apologize?"

"Certainly not. The one who is wrong can't be expected to take the initiative in patching up a quarrel. His emotions are too much involved. He's on the defensive. The one who is right, the one who has insight, is the one to stop the war. Women don't like to recognize that truth or at any rate they don't like to act on it. Surprise him. Apologize profusely, tell him the world doesn't exist for you without him, then turn loose some of the exuberant affection you advertised."

"It will certainly surprise him," she mused.

"What do you think he will do?"

"Why of course then he'll apologize too."

"If you can draw an apology out of him as easily as that," I urged, "it's worth while making the experiment."

"I believe I'll take you up on that," she rejoined with a grin that was still a bit bewildered.

Rather than trying always to get her own way (even if it is a good way!), a wise wife will often compromise, as successful politicians do. When an irresistible force meets an immovable object, there will certainly have to be a compromise.

Mr. and Mrs. H. are not quite as extreme as the old figure of speech suggests, but they are far apart in temperament. That is no handicap to marriage, provided they recognize the differences and deal with them intelligently. The opposite, in which people resembled each other completely, would be a dull situation.

Discussing the famous friendship of Bright and Cobden, the English statesmen of nearly a century ago whose support meant a great deal to the United States, a biographer remarked that they were "enough alike for harmony but not enough alike for boredom." That's a good formula for any friendship, including the deepest and most worth-while of all friendships, that of marriage.

The difference in the H. family is that Mrs. H. lives under pressure and likes to do so. She enjoys being on the go. She

can't sit still and do nothing. Mr. H. is a quiet and retiring sort of fellow, who doesn't particularly enjoy meeting people.

"He'd rather sit and read at home all the evening than to go out and have a good time," Mrs. H. protests.

"She doesn't seem to have any resources of her own," Mr. H. complains. "When I get home in the evening I'm tired and want to rest. She's just ready to start! She has to go places and do things. She'll wear me out."

There are plenty of marriages like that, and the only way to keep them out of trouble is to recognize the source of trouble in this difference of personalities, and then make a sensible adjustment to it.

If Mrs. H. drags her husband out every night she will wear him out—he's correct in that. If she never gets a chance to go out, she'll explode—figuratively, at least!

Obviously the easiest way to meet her needs is for her to go out more during the daytime. Mr. H. will have to concede her at least one evening a week; two would be better. Even though he'd rather stay at home, he'll go out with her, and they'll pick something that both enjoy.

She will have to plan her life so that she can go out during the daytime—every day, if she can organize herself well enough to permit it. She can pick out the activities that are most profitable to her, and throw herself into them. When evening comes, she'll have to find something to do at home most of the time.

Conditions sometimes become so bad that one of the partners believes "love" has gone forever. That is one of the unfortunate products of Infantile Romanticism, and one that wrecks innumerable marriages, quite needlessly.

Love does not travel on a one-way street.

Mrs. B. is not sure. "When I married Bob I was madly in love with him," she testifies. "This feeling continued for a couple of years after the wedding. Since the birth of our little girl a year ago, I seem to have lost my love for my husband. In fact, sometimes I feel as if I hate him. It scares me!

"What shall I do? One of my friends says it's wicked to continue living with a man if you don't love him. My mother says even if I don't think I love him, I ought to keep the home together. My

father tells me to stand pat, that my feelings may change. What I want to know is, does love ever come again, once it is completely gone?"

I doubt if anybody knows, Mrs. B. In the first place, I doubt if it's ever completely gone. In the second place, if it's gone, maybe it wasn't love at all. We could spend a lot of time debating the subject and still not reach any conclusion. An expert might need many months to explore your mind and at the end he still might not be able to give you the answer you are seeking, and prove that his answer was correct. I'll simply reply, then, that I vote with your father.

The chances are that your love wasn't a very deep feeling, at the start. It might be that you were more in love with yourself, "in love with love" as the common saying goes, than you were with Bob. It might be that when you think you hate him now, you are really hating yourself. It might be that you are hating your baby instead, and can't face that. I don't know.

But when you married, it would have seemed incredible that your "love" might one day evaporate. It may seem incredible now that the love which you say is gone could return, but one is no more incredible than the other. If we took a census of all the wives (and husbands) who once thought their love had disappeared and found later that it came back stronger, deeper, richer, much more worth while than before, we would have the population of one of the largest cities in the United States!

Start all over again. Start today to reorganize your marriage, to put permanent foundations under it, to put motherhood in its proper place in that marriage. Let me hear from you again a year from today.

## *How a Husband Can "Manage" His Wife*

If you want anything in this world, look for it in your wife. You may be surprised to find that she has it.

"I'm happily married," Mr. D. asserts, "but I sometimes feel as if I'm missing something. My wife is a good homemaker, conscientious, a bit serious. My common sense tells me that's the right make-up for a wife, but my imagination sometimes suggests that it would be fun to have a wife who is a little more romantic, even frivolous!"

My imagination suggests to me that Mr. D.'s wife probably makes—secretly to herself—just the same complaint about him. It would be helpful for the two of them to compare notes some day.

His situation is a common one. Psychologist Fritz Kunkel has called attention to the fact that all of us in childhood developed images of opposites, in regard to the other sex. The man develops an image of a princess, but likewise an image of a gypsy. Both are attractive. In his later "love life" he may alternate between them, if he has never grown up emotionally. As soon as he finds a princess, he is dissatisfied and wishes he had a gypsy. When he gets a gypsy, he longs for the more stable qualities of his princess. He is continually changing from one to another.

Maturity in marriage, Dr. Kunkel declares, is reached when you bring together in one person these opposite ideals, instead of thinking that they can be found only in separate persons. You can be sure that your wife contains a little of each of them. You'll have to

be honest with her, and honest with yourself in analyzing your own childhood images as well as in analyzing your wife.

Similarly every woman—so Dr. Kunkel believes—grows up with contradictory images, one of the lover who is a “good provider,” a pillar of solidity, and the other a romantic rascal. She has the same difficulty in escaping from her childhood and putting both of these images into one man—namely, you.

Maybe Mr. D. has not made much of an effort to find the gypsy in his wife because he has been certain that it was in some other woman. This is a good day for him to start to look for traces of it; to create a situation that will give the gypsy in her a chance to come out. It may take several attempts, partly because he lacks experience of what to do, partly because she has probably stifled it herself.

If he is not impatient or easily discouraged, if he gives her a chance, she may surprise him.

Other husbands fail, not merely by ignoring the make-up of a wife, but by starving her. That was the situation in the McC. family. Mrs. McC. was “in the red,” emotionally.

“She’s bankrupt,” I had to tell her husband. “You know what bankruptcy means, Mr. McC.”

“Well, yes, of course; but we’re getting along all right financially—I don’t think that has anything to do with her feeling so discouraged and irritable.”

“Neither do I,” I replied. “But there is more than one form of bankruptcy. The doctors tell you she is all right physically; they say there’s nothing the matter with her—it’s just an emotional problem.”

“Yes.”

“Naturally, there is just as much grief to be derived from an emotional problem as from a broken arm. In this case you have given me a clear picture of her difficulties. She’s an affectionate, warmhearted, outgoing sort of a person who has done everything she could for you during the two years of your marriage.”

“Yes, she has really tried to do too much, Dr. Popenoe.”

“But, according to what you tell me, you have not done too much in return. You’re busy. When she puts her arms around

your neck, maybe you push her away, saying 'Let's not be sentimental.'"

"I was brought up that way, Dr. Popenoe—always reserved. Inhibited, you'd say. My parents were like that. Cold."

"And so your wife's output of emotion has been great and continuous; her intake of emotion has been scanty and very occasional. If your expenditures are large and your income small, where will you end up?"

"In bankruptcy, of course. I see what you mean!"

"And to get out of bankruptcy, you can reduce your expenditures until they are below your income—which in this case would take them near to zero—or you can increase your income. Her income, emotionally, depends completely on you, Mr. McC."

He sat thoughtfully for several minutes. "She won't find me wanting from now on," he announced. "I'm going to balance the books."

Mr. T. got even further out of line. He was not neglectful or indifferent toward his wife; his attitude was much more active. The fact is that he was caught in a spiral of inflation. This time, however, it didn't affect his pocketbook—it affected his conscience. And the disharmony in his home kept getting more and more inflated.

To begin with, his wife didn't have much education for marriage. "Neither did I," Mr. T. admits; but as often happens, the deficiency seems more serious in others than it does in himself.

Besides, his wife is mainly responsible for keeping the house going, the children in order, the bills paid, and the neighbors mollified. Mr. T. could help her a lot more than he does, but he figures that is a woman's work and, in addition, if he is around home too much, he loses patience, and then the spiral of inflation takes another whirl. One step follows another in regular order. If you look in at any point, you can predict with some confidence what will happen next. The scheme runs like this:

1. Mrs. T. asks him to do something that he does not want to do, or that he thinks she should do for herself.
2. That makes him indignant, and he "bawls her out," to use his own description of the conversation.



3. After he has done that, he feels very guilty.
4. Because he feels guilty, he makes a great effort to be friendly and helpful.
5. When he shows that attitude, she is naturally encouraged (look back to No. 1 now, and note that this is where you came in) to ask him to do something that he does not want to do, or that he thinks she should do for herself.

6. That makes him indignant, and he "bawls her out"—well, that's enough to give you the idea, and you can go right ahead with 7, 8, 9, and so on, without any further help from me.

Where are they after all this? Approximately where they started, but not exactly. They haven't gone any farther, but they have been left with a greater accumulation of irritation, indignation, guilt, resentment, confusion, and frustration. It isn't merely a circular movement, therefore, but a spiral, and if they get much higher in it the marriage will certainly collapse.

The cure is largely self-evident, and since Mr. T. is really intelligent, it didn't take him long to see it, when he described the process to a counselor. The first thing was for him to recognize the useless and harmful pattern of his behavior, and stop it. The second thing was to give his wife more help. The third was to let her have some training in homemaking and child guidance.

They have made a good start, and are already coming down the spiral. It's really a lot easier, and pleasanter, than going up.

Instead of a spiral, some husbands remain on a level—a dead level of irritation. Mr. C. was at that level when he first came to see me. His wife cooks with gas, and he pays for the gas. That's why Mr. C. complains.

"She'll light a burner, and then begin to prepare something that she will put on the burner 10 minutes later," he narrated. "She'll take a pan off the stove and leave the gas burning because she expects to use it again. Why can't she turn off the burner when it isn't actually in use, and thus save money? It costs nothing to relight it—the stove is automatic. Maybe you'll think this is a small matter, Dr. Popenoe, but I think it is a useless waste of money."

Marriage is made up of just such small matters. These small matters—and the emotional reactions to them—often make or

break a marriage. Mr. C. could look at this one from several points of view:

1. His wife wastes a dime's worth of gas a week. Is she worth a dime a week to him?

2. Maybe he has made an issue of this, and she is simply trying to assert herself. According to the way she looks at it, he wastes a dollar a week on cigars, of which she disapproves. "When he saves the dollar, I'll save the dime," she tells herself.

3. She is overanxious to please him, and knows he likes to have his meals on time. She keeps the gas going because she is determined to be punctual at any cost.

Any reader can extend the list for Mr. C. There might be a lot of other possibilities. Maybe he has already nagged her on this until she is continuing it just to spite him—just to show that she won't be bossed, least of all in the kitchen. If he considers this important and hasn't exhausted his credit by calling attention to it so often that he has made a feud out of it, he might sit down with his wife and figure out how he can save more money on the budget for something she wants: "I'll save on this item; maybe you can save on that one."

But, first let him pick out a good item on which he himself proposes to save.

It is hard for husbands to realize that some of their difficulties are merely the result of a wife's anxiety to please.

The young man opposite me folded his paper. "I'm getting off at the next stop," he said, apparently half to me and half to himself. "I'll go home, and probably find that we're having cheese omelet for dinner."

"Is your place run on schedule like an old-fashioned boarding-house?" I inquired, just to keep the conversation going. "The boarders could depend on chicken on Sunday, croquettes on Monday, pea soup on Tuesday, roast beef on Wednesday—and so on around to chicken again next Sunday?"

"Not quite as regular as that," he replied. "We're just having a run on cheese omelet."

"And I judge you don't like it well enough to become enthusiastic over the prospect?"

"I liked it once—and I said so. That's where the trouble began."

"I should think your wife would be complimented to be told that you liked her cooking."

"It wasn't her cooking—that's just the trouble. Are you a married man?" he inquired with an apparent sudden change of subject.

"Very much so!"

"Well, then maybe you'll understand. Two weeks ago we were out to dinner in the home of a friend, and had a delicious cheese omelet. I was trying to be polite to the hostess, and praised it—too liberally, perhaps. Anyhow, the episode wasn't lost on my wife. Being a woman, she took it personally. She drew the conclusion that I was fond of cheese omelets and was reflecting on her because she had never given me one. So next day we had a cheese omelet at my house. We've had it four times since."

"And you can't say anything. . . ."

"Look," he replied a bit indignantly. "If I suggest a change, she'll take it as equivalent to a statement that hers are not as good as those of our hostess, to whom I had asserted that I was particularly fond of cheese omelets. She'll feel deeply hurt." He started for the door. "At least, I hope she has French fries with it," he muttered.

What can he do with a wife like that? I don't know! His best prospect is to "spread it out a little thinner." He can mention enthusiastically in the presence of friends, "It's hard to beat my wife when it comes to variety of choice dishes that she can turn out: scalloped oysters, cheese omelet, chicken à la king, lobster Newburgh, Virginia fried ham . . ."; and he might even add, "French fried potatoes." Then he can sit back and see what he gets for dinner the next night. I hope, for his sake, it won't be cheese omelet again.

If a wife sometimes worries her husband in this way by making a continuous performance out of what should be a one-time show, husbands often sin even more deeply by taking what might be a casually appropriate criticism and making it into a way of life! They drop too easily into what the textbooks call universals.

The husband who wants to deal in universals should pick out some good ones. Too often he does just the opposite. His con-

versation suggests that such good traits as his partner possesses are only occasional and the bad ones are universal—they are always present.

Mr. and Mrs. Q. come home from the party and review the evening. "You always bid too high on one face card," he grumbles. Frankly, I don't believe it. There must have been at least one exception in a lifetime. If so, Mr. Q.'s statement does not have universal application. Some of these assertions that "you always do such and such a thing" call to mind the ancient story of the father who protested to his son, "Haven't I told you a million times not to exaggerate?"

"You always forget to sew on my buttons." "You never look at the price tag." "You always forget to put down your expenditures." "You never stop to think that I might be tired." Such statements are never (!) true and always (!) harmful to a marriage.

If a husband must deal in universals, I repeat, let him look for a few that are complimentary. They might be helpful, not hurtful, provided they were at least reasonably accurate. If he has to take exception to something his wife did, he might add, "I know you always try to do the right thing, darling." If he has to reproach her for an omission he might conclude, "I haven't forgotten, sweetheart, that you are always planning for my welfare."

No husband should do unjustifiable violence to the truth, but he should keep his eye on the doughnut instead of the hole—always! It is hard for him to realize how important these trifles are to his wife.

There is Mr. M. for example, who really supposed that he was a pattern of what a good husband should be—until I had to ask him to come down to my office and talk over the causes of his wife's unhappiness.

Mr. M. pays the bills regularly. He doesn't complain (though he may look sour) if his wife runs up larger accounts than he expects. He provides an attractive home. He lets his wife have the car whenever she needs it.

What more can she want?

She seems unreasonable to want anything more than that. If

she'd just compare all that with what a lot of other wives have to put up with, she'd—well, that's the trouble with women, he guesses.

It never occurred to him that her gratitude for all these things wouldn't fill her life to overflowing—until I talked to him. That was after Mrs. M. had talked to me.

"It beats me," he said perplexedly. "What more can she want?"

"Women are queer creatures, aren't they?" I sympathized. "Roy Burkhart\*—you know of him. Minister of a big community church in Columbus, Ohio—writes a lot of books on love and marriage. . . ."

"What about him?"

"He asked a thousand wives what they thought were the marks of a good husband. Just listen to some of the things they sprang on him." I opened the book and read a few samples:

'He is not bored to stay home in the evening.

'He never reminds me of what a good cook his mother is.

'He helps with the dishes.

'He enjoys reading good books with me.

'He tells me interesting things about his work.

'He notices little changes I make in the home.

'He always cleans the tub or basin after washing.

'He appreciates new dishes I prepare.

'If I am in the dumps, he knows how to pull me out.

Mr. M. broke in. "Didn't any of them mention having a nice house in a good neighborhood?"

"No."

"Just trivial things like you read?"

"Yes."

He thought a while. "Dr. Popenoe, I really want to be a good husband," he said. "I thought I was doing pretty well. I guess I just didn't know. Will you lend me that book? I'm going to do some studying!"

Study and practice, study and practice—those are the things that help a man to be a good husband. How is it that they ignore the fact? Let Mr. J. serve as an illustration. He has just taken up golf.

\* Burkhart, Roy, *From Friendship to Marriage*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1938, p. 87.

"I'm glad you learned golf," I assured him. "It must be. . . ."

"I said I was just beginning."

"Well, lots of other people play successfully," I replied. "It's a well-known game and you have read about it, even watched people play. You certainly don't think that you are unable to start out and immediately go along with the best of them?"

"I don't see the joke," he replied sourly.

"Come to think of it, I believe you're right," I replied. "You don't expect to start golf and, without study or practice, play a perfect game. . . ."

"What's the point of all this, Dr. Popenoe?"

"Merely that you are proceeding intelligently in golf, knowing that you need years of study and practice to make a good showing; and yet you come to me to complain that you can't get along in marriage—which is certainly no less important and no less difficult than golf—and it appears that you plan neither to study nor to practice, and yet assume that you should be able to play a perfect game from the first day."

He looked at me sullenly.

"I was reminded of this, just before you came in," I continued, "by some remarks which Leland E. Hinsie,\* professor of psychiatry at Columbia University, makes in this book. . . ."

"You think I need a psychiatrist," Mr. J. muttered.

I started to read from the book: "In just what other department of living do we expect to jump overnight from inexperience to experience. . . ."

"The wedding night," Mr. J. remarked, with a faint grin for the first time.

"Nor do we gain eminence quickly in avocations," I continued to read. "We allow years for the achievement of a position of soundness in music, the theater, travel, and so on."

He started to interrupt, but I continued reading: "If we gave as little time to the training of our intellect as we do to our emotions, very few would rise above the level of idiocy."

Mr. J. rose from his seat. "I'll have to admit it, Dr. Popenoe," he declared. "I acted like an idiot. I'm ready to admit it. Now

\* Hinsie, Leland E., *Understandable Psychiatry*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1948, p. 220.

let's get down to cases. I want to learn. Where shall we begin?"

Even if a husband has gone for some years without taking stock of himself and organizing his home on a sound basis (so far as he is concerned), it is never too late to improve the situation. Mr. D., who called on me not long ago, is one of those who had a change of heart. "I can see that I have been running the family a little too highhandedly," he admitted. "The children were small, my wife busy, and it was too easy for me to be a little dictator, to order everybody around just as I used to do in the Army, from the supreme elevation of my position as a top sergeant.

"The children are growing older. My wife is a grand woman—good planner and manager. I really want to make our family over into a cooperative enterprise as you suggest; but how do I begin?"

Begin slowly. That's most important for Mr. D. and all others. No husband should proceed by a sudden and violent revolution. Give evolution a chance. Specifically:

1. He should start with relations between himself and his wife. If he gets them on a cooperative basis, it will not be hard to spread the pattern to include the children.

2. Handling the family finances furnishes a good opportunity to begin, in most instances. If the home is not on a budget, start one immediately and see that it includes an independent allowance with which the wife can do as she pleases—however small the amount. This may eventually work up to a joint bank account on which most successful families rely.

3. Organize a family council. This may meet once a week. Many such councils meet at dinner time. This is satisfactory if there are not exciting or controversial topics. The chairman—which might be husband and wife alternately—can control that. In any convention, a wise chairman won't bring up a very important controversial subject just before adjournment but waits for a suitable occasion. If things get too interesting the children will stop eating. Wait at least until dessert, then; better still, after the dishes are washed.

4. Topics suitable for beginning, which will include the children's interests, are agreement on division of labor in the household chores, and recreation in which the children are involved. If there is to be a picnic Sunday afternoon, let everyone have a chance

to discuss details. Let the children have a chance to say what types of work they feel more interested in and able to do. Even the youngest can do something—dust the rungs of the chairs or the books on the shelves.

Husbands, who start gradually in this way, will soon find themselves captains of a smoothly functioning team.



*Make Your Habits Behave*

MUCH of the unpleasantness in daily life is due to little habits that can and should be corrected. Some things improve with age, but a habit is not necessarily one of them.

"I have a habit which is particularly annoying to my wife—and I guess you can't blame her for being annoyed," Mr. McC. reports. "Almost automatically, I disagree with anything she proposes. She suggests that we go to the movies; I say 'No.' Maybe I want to go to the movies, but I object from force of habit.

"From reading some of the popular books on psychology, I know that this is merely negativism—the habit a child three or four or five years old picks up of asserting himself by disagreeing with his mother. I want to get rid of it; but after 30 years, it's pretty well ingrained. How does one go about prying such a thing loose from his make-up?"

Mr. O'D., who came to see me at about the same time, has a similar problem. He's stubborn—that's what his wife says. On occasions she puts it a little more bluntly—he's pigheaded or he's mulish.

But Mr. O'D. interprets the facts differently. "I'm not stubborn, dear," he protests, "I'm merely right."

She replies that there are always, in his opinion, two sides to every question: his side and the wrong side. She thinks he's like the juror who went home, after an all-night session of the panel, declaring bitterly that he had never encountered eleven such obstinate men.

Investigation shows that stubborn is not the word for Mr. O'D.

He would be described more accurately as negativistic. His tendency is to go by opposites. This trait is characteristic of small children, usually being most pronounced between 30 and 40 months of age. Whatever is proposed, they are opposed. Their vocabulary is overloaded with "No," "I don't want to," and "I won't." It's a child's way of asserting his independence and protesting against adult control; a crude method of proving to himself that he is independent and able to get along without the help of others.

The child outgrows this, unless his parents mismanage him; but he is likely to have another spell of negativism about the age of 16, as plenty of parents could testify and as the researches of psychologist Luton Ackerson showed. Sometimes, like Mr. O'D. he never outgrows the tendency but carries it right through life. Apparently, he is rebelling against the decisions of others; actually, he is rebelling against his own feeling of inferiority. He rejects any suggestion, not because it is a bad suggestion, but because acceptance of it would imply that he is inferior to the one who made the suggestion.

Such negativism is not directed to individuals alone, as it is by Mr. McC. and Mr. O'D. toward their wives. It may be directed against society as a whole. We have had plenty of illustrations of this on a large scale: people who drank merely to show that they were opposed to Prohibition; people who bought on the black market merely to demonstrate that they were not to be coerced by price control; people who smuggled some trifling article in from Mexico merely to display their contempt of the government's effort to collect import duties.

Negativistic behavior of this sort doesn't help anybody. It doesn't help Mr. McC. or Mr. O'D., and it hurts their marriages.

The first thing to do is just what Mr. McC. has already done—recognize the habit, recognize its origin, and recognize its effects on marriage. So far so good. And then:

1. He should ask himself what else he might do if he gave up this habit of negativism. To take the illustration he mentioned, what other course could he follow when his wife says, "Let's see a picture tonight?"

2. If he were to adopt some different policy or form some dif-

ferent habit to take the place of negativism, what else would be involved?

3. What would be the difficulties in substituting some new habit?

4. What would be the advantages?

5. What does he want to do about it?

6. Then go ahead and do it.

If, in answering question No. 6, and in the light of all the others, he decides that he does not want to do anything about it, all he needs to do then is to stand pat.

On the other hand, if he decides that it is worth while to change that habit, in spite of the affection he naturally feels for it after 30 years of intimate association, he can certainly do it. He might go by opposites and try deliberately to form the habit of agreeing with everything she says, and then asking *her* if she can think of any good reason why it shouldn't be done. I suggest to Mr. McC. that he try this—it will certainly surprise her.

Another carry-over from childhood, which disturbs many a marriage, is the habit of trying to rule the world by tantrums. When Doris was two or three years old, she found that she could get her own way if she would lie down on the floor, kick, bite, scratch, and scream. Mother and father generally ended by giving in.

Mother and father have long been out of her life. She is married and has two children of her own. But the pattern which she found useful in childhood has stayed with her. When she wants to get the best of her husband in an argument, she still has a tantrum.

"I'm ashamed of it," she declares. "I don't know why I do it, and I don't know how to stop. I've got the habit! My husband is disgusted, and the next day I'm disgusted with myself. I know a good marriage can't be built on a wife's tantrums. How can I stop?"

It will certainly take time, persistence, and determination for Doris; but the longer she delays, the harder it will be. There are three steps to take, and all of them will be hard for her.

1. She must learn to avoid the conditions that pull the trigger on her emotions. I don't know what they are in her case. Let's

assume, for the sake of illustration, that one thing she can't stand is to have her husband criticize her for being extravagant. When the first-of-the-month bills come in, he makes some caustic comments and she replies by becoming emotional. Don't let such bills come in, then. Make a budget, pay cash, talk over unusual expenditures. That one source of agony will disappear. Handle others similarly.

2. If there are conditions that she can't change, she may learn to like them. This isn't merely a "sweet lemon" attitude; it's merely becoming more objective and realistic. Study the situation; be more interested in how it came to happen, rather than in the fact that its happening is inconvenient.

3. She can practice "ladylike" behavior, even when she is emotional. This really does take practice, and she'll have plenty of failures at first; but keep it up. Maybe it will be easier for her to identify herself, in imagination, with some woman she admires. Maybe it's Eleanor Roosevelt, or Mamie Eisenhower, or Emily Post, or the president of her Women's Club. When she feels riled, she can take a deep breath and ask herself, "How would *she* behave now?" She would behave like a lady—let us hope Doris can do the same herself. She'll find that she can become very emotional and still act like a lady.

Lack of tact is another complaint which many wives (and plenty of husbands, too) make of their partners. Be tactful! Easy advice to give, but how can anyone follow it?

"I'm in hot water all the time because I'm so tactless," Mrs. N. told us. "People misinterpret things I say, and I spend my time trying to explain them away, or apologizing, or simply being miserable.

"We're just moving to a new community. It's largely a matter of business but partly, I must admit, because so many of our neighbors have turned against us, due to my tactlessness. I want to make a fresh start. People tell me to be more tactful. How can I? It sounds to me like telling me to reach for the moon!"

It's not quite as bad as that. All of us can improve our techniques in this way. Psychologist Donald Laird has given some suggestions in his interesting book, *The Technique of Building Per-*

*sonal Leadership*. It will pay any tactless person to read the whole book; but here are four specific suggestions he gives that anyone else can put into effect with good results:

1. Treat everyone as if he were your superior. You don't have to be obsequious or adopt an attitude of servility, but make up your mind to act as if you were talking to "quality folks."

2. Consider their whims, opinions, and prejudices. This turned out to be one of the points at which Mrs. N. had particularly gone astray. Instead of blurting out "I don't agree with that at all," she now looks for information, saying "I've never known much about that; tell me."

3. Use constructive "smile words" and phrases. Put things in a way that will please—and to do this you'll have to practice and plan in advance. Flattery need not be insincere; often it's just a question of whether you are looking at the doughnut or the hole.

4. Swap envy for friendliness.

When Mrs. N. got into her new neighborhood, she started out at once on this program. In three months she felt more comfortable among the neighbors than she had felt in a long time.

Cordiality is another habit—and it *is* mainly a habit, which anyone can make or unmake—that smooths the path of life remarkably. There are few things that will help a young wife, or a young husband, more in making and keeping acquaintances.

Mrs. W. complained, among other things, that no one paid any attention to her. "I'm the quiet type," she explained. "I was born that way, and I don't see that I can change my constitutional nature—or that anybody should be expected to. But it does gall me when flashy and even trashy women get all the attention at a social gathering!"

It is true that some flashy girls get more attention than they deserve. But every man likes to feel that he is talking to a human being, not a zombie, and that what he says, or what he is, makes a favorable impression on those he meets. After all, that was exactly what Mrs. W. wanted to feel, too! We showed her that she was not going halfway. When she tried deliberately to be a little more cordial, a little more outgoing, a little more responsive, she began to notice a change in the attitude of the world toward her.

My colleague, psychologist Roswell H. Johnson, who has given

special attention to ways of improving personality traits, suggests the following as a starter, in dealing with this habit of cordiality:

1. Begin with the greeting. Don't dodge greetings by pretending not to see people, or by apparently being preoccupied with someone else.

2. Substitute for purely conventional words such as "hello" or "howdy," some full sentence expressing a cordial idea such as, "It's good to see you again," or "I have missed you," or "I hope you had a pleasant vacation," and the like.

3. Do not let the greeting be perfunctory or unsmiling. Put "yourself" into it.

4. Smiling is of the utmost importance—of course not a cast-iron smile, but one that follows the conversation and situation appropriately.

5. Have in mind the fact that the recipient may really be in need of cordiality—just as you feel that you have been! The newcomer and the shy person particularly merit attention.

One who practices these things, who goes out of his way to find an opportunity to do so, may be pleasantly surprised by what happens.

Mrs. T. had formed another habit which hampers many women. She was habitually late, never on time, always keeping somebody waiting. When she came to see us, she was tired and discouraged. The harder she tries to be punctual, the more she seems to fail. And her husband is becoming a little too sarcastic about it. They have been married only a couple of years. She wondered whether this difficulty is going to become worse and worse for the next quarter of a century.

"We went to the movies last night," she told me. "All my husband had to do was to put on his hat, and he was ready. I had determined that I would be right on the dot. But I was slowed down by a phone call. Then I just couldn't go off leaving all the dirty dishes in the sink. Finally I got dressed, and found a seam had ripped; I had to take the dress off and put on another one. That meant changing to different shoes as well. And so we were half an hour late, missed the first part of the show, and Joe sulked all the evening. I don't blame him, but what can I do?"

A good many women ask the same question. At least Mrs. T. isn't alone in her misfortunes. And a good many men ask ques-

tions about this, to which they don't seem to find any satisfactory answers.

Mr. L. tried the plan of announcing the time for departure half an hour earlier than was—or should have been—necessary. He thought if he gave his wife an extra 30 minutes, they'd make it on time. Instead, she merely argued each time that they really didn't need to plan to start that early; and she was late just the same.

Mr. B. tried the plan of announcing that they would leave the house at 7:45 or else they wouldn't leave at all. So when his wife appeared, carefully dressed, at 7:50, he informed her that the whole deal was off. It was not a constructive plan—it merely produced quarrels and hurt feelings.

Mr. T. ought to recognize that it is harder for his wife to get ready than it is for him. But maybe she needs to plan her time more carefully. We encouraged her to make a list of things to do, and do them in the morning (for instance, putting dress shields in the blouse she planned to wear). She saw to it that her clothes were mended and laid out. She had dinner early and used paper plates that did not have to be washed. She planned as an Army staff would for zero hour. She couldn't always hit the bull's-eye, but her accuracy improved each month.

The sum of all such habits as I have been discussing in this chapter is unpopularity.

"People don't like me," Mrs. R. complained. The fact was a handicap to her and to her husband as well. She had recently moved into a new community where, at least, she had nothing to live down. It would be an advantage to her husband, a young professional man, if his wife were a good mixer and made acquaintances easily.

Let's take an inventory and see what is the matter with her. She is in her early thirties and not unattractive physically. She has a slight tendency to wear cheap and flashy things; still she doesn't dress badly. The trouble must be in her personality.

What is it that prevents people from being successful socially? The late psychologist John J. B. Morgan \* listed the following barriers to popularity:

\* Morgan, J. J. B., *How to Keep a Sound Mind*, rev. ed. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1946.

1. Egocentricity, that is, being self-centered, "all wrapped up in yourself."

2. Selfish exploitation of other people; trying to get the best of them; using them for your own advantage; always having an ulterior motive in your friendships.

3. Parading your own good qualities.

4. Being self-conscious and making other people uncomfortable by your blunders of speech and action. To be more exact, they are not uncomfortable over your blunders, but over the way you yourself "take on" when you make a trivial blunder.

All of these barriers which Professor Morgan enumerates can really be reduced to one. Selfishness is the real barrier to popularity.

In the light of this principle, scrutinize Mrs. R.'s behavior a little more closely. Just as we expected, she is standing in her own light. "She is her own worst enemy," as the old saying goes. Her conversation is devoted almost wholly to talking about herself. Her acquaintances are much more interested in themselves than they are in her. Why doesn't she play up to this fact and get them to talk about themselves? Then they would give her credit for being a brilliant conversationalist!

Mrs. R. was brought up as an only child. She formed habits, in her early years, which were still hampering her—the habit, for instance, of being in the center of the stage. But she really wanted to improve her technique. She began to study and apply some new habits that made for popularity, just as her husband studied and applied the results of scientific progress in his own profession. She is already beginning to feel that she is just as popular as anyone else. She is learning to make her habits behave.



*Keep Your Temperament in Line*

If you are in trouble right now, you have nothing to worry about.

Worry is not concerned with the present. That is one of the points at which Mrs. A. was off the track when she wrote us, "Our situation is so bad that I spend all my time worrying. I'm getting into a desperate condition."

If she is able to get into a desperate condition she is probably able to get out of it, too. But not by worrying.

Worry, as Dr. Herbert Popenoe points out in his popular handbook for students, *Now You're in College*, is the anticipation of some future pain or unpleasantness; it is never a direct anxiety about your immediate conditions. "Worry involves no reason, no judgment, no planning for future contingencies. It is just plain worry, and it is as pernicious as it is widespread—and unnecessary."

Mrs. A., like many other people, would certainly like to make it unnecessary. What is she going to do about it?

First, face her "right now" troubles, and make some plans to deal with them. Worry is an indication of ignorance, says psychologist J. Stanley Gray. Presumably Mrs. A. doesn't want to be convicted of ignorance, so this is the day to begin studying her present problems, getting some outside help if possible, and clearing them up—or facing the fact that they can't be cleared up and saying to herself, "So what?"

If she goes to work on her difficulties today, she won't have so much time to waste in worrying about what is going to happen next year. The worrier is one who is not trying to solve his prob-

lems, but prefers merely to talk about them—or to sit and think aimlessly about them. Most of us have a tendency to worry. It's a habit that can easily be allowed to grow until it has a firm grip on us. But the cure is plain, Mrs. A. Go to work vigorously on today's difficulties, instead of lying on the bed speculating about those that might arise next year.

Mrs. C., who called on me lately, was facing such a "today's difficulty." She had, so she said, just received an ultimatum. "My husband says I've got to change, or else . . .," she reported. "He says he has had enough of being ridiculed, run down, and depreciated by me; that it has happened for the last time, as far as he is concerned.

"And he's right, Dr. Popenoe, absolutely right. I've been a fool. We had a terrible scene—I don't see how I could live through another one like it. I know he's right; my home and marriage are at stake; I want to change; but how? I'm afraid to say anything to him now, for fear I'll make a mistake; so I keep my mouth shut, and then he thinks I'm sulking and pouting. It isn't that at all. I'm just petrified with fear. You can't turn a deep-seated attitude like mine on and off as you'd turn an electric light. I'll do anything to meet his demand. Tell me how to start."

Mrs. C. is the victim of her temperament. Much of the trouble in marriage comes from temperamental faults which people make little or no effort to correct. Too often they try to justify themselves by saying, "I'm born that way." But no one can go through the world pleasantly and profitably unless he makes an intelligent and persistent effort to keep his temperament in line. The job may not be as hard as Mrs. C. thinks, since she has the determination to change, and that is indispensable. Keeping her mouth shut isn't a change in the right direction—she herself recognizes this. In any such situation there are three steps to take:

1. Direct your attention toward the difficulty, focus down on it, strip off the incidentals and nonessentials. Mrs. C. has already done that—or her husband has done it for her!
2. Put something else in its place and keep it there. The thing to put in the place of ridicule is appreciation, praise, recognition, understanding. Mrs. C. knows that. Then let her practice it. Practice in and out of season. Don't be silly in heaping fulsome and

insincere compliments on him that will merely aggravate him; but look for opportunities to say something pleasant, and then say it. Practice, practice, practice.

3. Check up on yourself periodically. In Mrs. C.'s case she should take a little time each day, perhaps after he leaves for the shop, to go over everything that happened the day before. She will see where she got off the beam, where she missed an opportunity to be agreeable, then be guided accordingly.

Many attitudes, many temperamental faults, can be changed within a reasonable time, by taking those three steps. It should not be difficult for anyone who is really determined.

Nagging is one of the faults that makes a marriage miserable. It can be done by either husband or wife, but I think it can be said safely that it is more common among wives. One of the best cures for nagging is statistics. If not a cure, they are at least a good start for further treatment. Mrs. E. came to the Institute office when she was doing some heart-searching on the subject.

"Yesterday I read to my husband a statement in the newspaper," she explained, "which said that in every survey made nagging was described by husbands as the commonest fault of their wives. I asked my husband if he considered me a nagger, and he was very evasive in his reply. Evidently he thought so but didn't want to hurt my feelings by saying so. He's always very considerate.

"This shocked me, Dr. Popenoe. I had never thought of myself as a nagger. What shall I do?"

Of course the thing for her to do is to stop nagging, but as a preliminary she will want to convince herself that she really is a nagger. That's why I suggest a statistical treatment of the subject.

Mrs. A. had a four-year-old child who, she complained, always dawdled over his meals. An observer watched a typical meal and found that the mother urged or admonished or disparaged the child 72 times in 25 minutes!

Mr. B. was one of the back-seat drivers who feels it necessary to give his wife continuous instruction when he is with her in the car, although she drives it alone without any trouble. She kept track of his instructions on a drive of three miles, from their home downtown. He told her what to do 12 times in that distance.

It is easier for someone else to clock you than it is for you to keep tab on yourself, but you can do it if you really want to. Have a pencil and a piece of paper ready, and make a cross on the paper every time you admonish or instruct your husband, every time you complain or criticize—in short, every time you address him otherwise than in ordinary conversation.

If you have a good many X's on the paper after a day or two, take stock and see just what are the subjects of your nagging. Deal with them according to the nature of the case. For instance:

1. If you are continually reminding him that he has not done something which you want done, see if you can't do it for yourself.

2. If you are continually criticizing something he does, make up your mind either to ignore it or to find some indirect way of dealing with it.

3. If you are continually complaining because you lack something that you would like to have, try the policy for a week of praising something that you do have, instead.

Maybe Mrs. E. needs more outside interests, a hobby, a garden, or more friends. She can afford to try a lot of different remedies. The one thing she can't afford is to continue nagging.

For a more general prescription, we might divide the remedy into two parts like an old-fashioned Seidlitz powder; neither part is effective unless the other is added to it. We'll begin with

No. 1. DON'T.

Don't tell him something that he already knows—unless it is pleasant. If you love him, you may mention the fact as often as you like. But if he snores, it is not necessary even to allude to the fact. He already knows it. You're not telling him anything, therefore; you're merely trying to make yourself feel superior by making him feel inferior, uncomfortable, or unsuccessful. What good will that do your marriage?

Correspondingly, don't repeat what you have once said—again I make the exception, "unless it is pleasant." If your comment was useless the first time, it will be definitely harmful the second.

Don't tell him he has made a mistake—he already knows it. The feeling that he has made a mistake is enough punishment for

him, without your self-righteous indignation poured on top of it.

In case these "Don'ts" should stop all conversation on your part, I'll add

No. 2. DO.

Do be ready with something pleasant or interesting to talk about, when he comes home tired at night.

Do comment occasionally on his good points, express admiration of his achievements—great or small.

Do this consistently—that is, as well as you can—for 30 days, and see what a change it makes in the atmosphere of your, and his, home!

Nagging is particularly common among people who are impulsive. On the Johnson Temperament Analysis, which we use continually at the American Institute of Family Relations, they score low on self-mastery. Anyone whose tendency is to "obey that impulse" may be in trouble most of the time.

It all depends on what kind of an impulse you have, of course; but most of us, like Mr. B., seem to have a lot of impulses that are not very helpful to us in getting along with other people. "I'm always in hot water because I'm too impulsive," he complained. "The minute I have said or done something, I know it was a mistake; but the beans have been spilled and sometimes it's a mighty hard job to pick them up. I wish I knew how to curb this tendency."

A lot of other people would like to know how to do so, too. There is no simple trick that will work. Improvement in this tendency to overimpulsiveness is an important part of marriage counseling, and when the chart shows low self-mastery, the Institute suggests to its clients many lines along which they can proceed. I'll borrow four of them here.

1. Keep yourself in the best possible shape physically by avoiding fatigue, getting plenty of sleep, building up your health, and by eliminating completely the use of alcoholic beverages.

2. Plan your day's work in advance. This will help you to form the habit of orderliness and will bring fewer temptations to acting on the spur of the moment.

3. Limit yourself to what is feasible. If you look around you'll note that many impulsive people are working under pressure.

Sometimes they seem to have the idea that working to the point of exhaustion is admirable. Remember that "easy does it." Don't expect absolute perfection in yourself or anyone else. There is no such thing.

4. Study other people and try to adjust yourself to them instead of merely "expressing yourself." All of us differ from each other. The impulsive person is often too intent on proclaiming his own difference—on asserting himself. Forget it.

There is no short cut. Overcoming impulsiveness is one of the difficult jobs in life. Be satisfied to take one step toward it at a time; but keep on stepping. Failure to do so may lead to the building up of serious difficulties.

One of these is illustrated by Mrs. B. "I'm ready to blow up," she wrote me. "I feel like biting nails—not fingernails, but ten-penny nails. Once in a while I get mad like this and want to explode. Between times I'm perfectly all right—even my husband admits that.

"I suppose I accumulate petty resentments for a while; then they boil over. If I'm alone in the house, as I am right now, it is not so bad. If my husband is here, I make trouble. I'm sure other women have similar experiences. How do they deal with them?"

Of course the proper thing for Mrs. B. to do is to find out and remove the causes of these resentments. But as a mere expedient, or what the doctors call symptomatic treatment, she can help herself to ease up the strain in a variety of ways.

If she lived in the country, she could go out and chop wood. That's a favorite old-time prescription which nearly always works. There's something about seeing the chips fly, that makes you feel that you are whittling down your own troubles.

Another way is to go into the kitchen and beat up a cake. If you have an electric mixer, don't use it. A spoon is good enough. Whip up a batch of popovers for dinner. Make up your mind that you'll beat so much air into them that you'll have to anchor the pan in the oven to keep it from rising, too.

Go into your closet and shut the door; then shout out your troubles. Open your mouth and yell. (This assumes that you have no neighbors on the other side of the partition, who will call the police and fire departments.) Take everything out of your closet

and throw it on the bed. Then put it back in good order. Throwing the stuff out will help to give vent to your hostility. Putting it back in good order offers a more constructive occupation, as a follow-up.

You'll probably find something you want to give away. You'll get a lot of new ideas, as you work over the contents of that closet. You may really be surprised to find how much relief it has given you.

Failure to curb a temperamental fault like this may let it grow to more serious proportions, and in the case of a man, who is likely by nature to be more violent, it may go beyond the bounds of safety! Captain Q. was disturbed by his tendency to quarrel with his helpmeet. "I don't intend to do so," he explains, "but when I get mad I don't seem to know what to do about it."

In his excellent book, *Love and Marriage*, F. Alexander Magoun suggests several steps that anyone can take.

1. As soon as you recognize that you are becoming angry, get away by yourself. Take a walk. Sit on a park bench. (That is a good cooling-off process in winter!) Professor Magoun suggests that you drop into the nearest empty church, and sit there awhile. That might be an interesting experience.

2. When you get there, you will recognize that your imagination is working overtime on what you are going to say, or would like to say, or wish you dared to say to your wife. Don't take any action until you have come to the end of that phase. Get out of the world of fantasy and into the world of reality, before you undertake to deal with the difficulty any further.

3. When you are able to get out of this quicksand and begin to examine the situation objectively, ask yourself what is going on in your wife's mind. If I were to meet her just then and ask her, "What's the trouble?" what would she reply? How would she describe what had just happened?

4. In the light of that, ask yourself what you think really happened. What was it all about, anyway? Was it because she had moved the sofa to the other side of the living room, or was it just because you want to be boss and show off your determination to dominate? Try to distinguish clearly between what actually happened and your interpretation of what happened.

Professor Magoun gives a good many more suggestions, but anyone who has gone as far as No. 4 will be on the right track.

Whatever you do, don't fall back on the claim that your temper is inherited and "you can't do anything about it." Mr. O., another of our clients, had gotten himself into serious trouble by failing to control his temper. "My father was just like that," he asserted. "It runs in the family, like red hair."

That doesn't mean it can't be modified. Even red hair can be modified—read the label on the peroxide bottle! And Mr. O. can do something with that other family inheritance of his if he wants to make the effort. For the sake of Mrs. O., I hope he'll try. The story that she told me about the effects of his bad disposition isn't one that ought to be published as a continued story.

That temper doesn't belong to Mr. O. He belongs to it—just now, at least. It has a firm grip on him. It's running him ragged. He might start off with an autobiography, head it "How did I get that way?" and make a list of the reasons why he has let this temper put him through his paces. Going back into as early childhood as possible, he will recall, I'm sure, several conspicuous illustrations from boyhood. What did he get out of them? Was it merely a matter of getting attention, of having the spotlight turned on him instead of on a younger brother or sister? Was it a method of getting his own way from a timid mother or nurse? Did he hold his breath until he was blue in the face, so they gave in to keep him from sudden death? (Did you ever hear of a child dying that way?) Be honest. Draw the correct conclusion. Maybe it will be something like this—"I formed the habit of showing a bad temper in order to attract attention to myself."

Then Mr. O., or anyone else, should make a list of the occasions, during the past week or month, when he gave way to his temper; note what set it off; note the result.

After he has taken stock in these ways, he should apply the lesson he has learned. When he feels the beginning of a tantrum, it is time to ask himself: "Is this just a habit? What am I really expecting to gain by it? What could I do to achieve my goal in a less obnoxious and more adult way?"

Then he should take that way. He'll backslide frequently, but he'll form, gradually and steadily, some more desirable habits.



It is a mistake to consider temperamental traits fatalistically, as if they involved some predestination which cannot be changed. To a certain extent they depend on inborn tendencies, of course, but that does not relieve anyone from the necessity of keeping them in line. Failure to do so breaks up many marriages. Success in doing so turns many marriages from endurance contests into sources of satisfaction.

*Retire To, Not From*

ONE of the greatest mistakes any human being can make is to "retire."

Mr. Z. was inclined to agree with that proposition, but the family wanted to argue. "They tell me it's time for me to 'take it easy,'" he reported. "They say I've worked hard for nearly half a century and I'm entitled to a rest. I don't feel the need of one! As far as I can judge, my work is just as good as ever, though possibly a bit slower. But my firm has an ironclad rule of retirement at 65, so I'm out in November. I want to plan my life intelligently. What do you suggest?"

I suggest that Mr. Z. should not let his family kill him with mistaken kindness. Human beings are made for activity. If he looks around he'll see plenty of illustrations of the following points:

1. When you leave the job, don't hang around the home. It will be embarrassing to your wife, who has been accustomed to having you away all day. No matter how much she loves you, she'll find her routine greatly upset if you're on her hands day in and day out!

2. "Retire to, not from!" You won't be working any longer for Apex Industries, Inc., but you may be working just as hard in several other lines. Keep busy.

3. Enjoy your hobbies, but don't try to build your life on them. Be productive. Find some jobs as well as hobbies. They will be part-time jobs, perhaps, and maybe even volunteer jobs—there are plenty of needs in the world that you can help to meet. But

don't think that a steady diet of loafing-and-playing is going to nourish you.

4. Do more for other people. Mr. M., aged 74, dropped in yesterday. "I'm on my way to the Johnsons," he explained. "You know, I lie awake a good deal at night. I make use of that time to think of people who need a little help. Mrs. Johnson told my wife that her sink was stopped up, and that Walt couldn't fix it because he's still in bed from his auto accident. I can fix it!"—and he was on his way. If you lie awake at night (most elderly people do), try using your time that way.

Failure to recognize this need for productivity leads to tragedies. Mrs. F. told me of her own experience: "A couple of years ago my father-in-law retired from business. He had always been active. We supposed we were showing him a kindness by encouraging him to let up, to live with us and spend his remaining years merely in enjoying himself.

"But from the time he arrived, he simply seemed to—well, deteriorate is the word, I guess. He lost interest in everything, seemed to have nothing to live for; in a year he sort of faded away. He died.

"Now my own father has reached the age of compulsory retirement in the railway company with which he has spent his life. The question is what shall he do? He could make his home with us—but I'm scared when I think of what happened to my husband's father. Do you think we killed him with kindness? Is it actually harmful to a man, even an old man, to stop work suddenly and completely? What on earth shall we suggest?"

I think any experienced person would suggest that Mrs. F.'s father should taper off, not quit work completely. Human beings are made for activity, not for loafing.

Psychologist C. M. Morgan studied 500 men and women who were on relief in New York state. Those who were happy were, in general, those who were still doing something productive. Mr. L. ran a little store. He didn't make a living out of it, but it kept him alive! Mr. McC. did gardening, Mrs. J. sewed for her grandchildren, Mrs. S. did practical nursing, and so on.

When such a contribution to society was no longer possible, either because of failing health, blindness, deafness, or merely be-

cause other people insisted "You're too old to work," the end was frequently near. Deterioration set in; they began to live like vegetables, not human beings, and before very long they were likely to pass out of the picture.

A lot of our ideas about old-age assistance in this country are wrong, from a biological point of view. You have discovered that for yourself. As long as people can contribute something—anything at all—to others, society needs them. And it's a disastrous thing for any of us to feel that he's not needed.

On the other hand, some men get a new start in life. One man laid out for himself each year "a new career." In a decade he'll have ten new careers—all after he retired from his career!

"A lot of other men could do just the same," says Mrs. I. "That's why I want to tell you about my father. He spent more than 40 years in various clerical jobs, always working hard and raising a family at the same time; a good family, in my very prejudiced opinion! He never had time to do a lot of things that he always wanted to do.

"When he retired, he announced that he wasn't going to waste the rest of his life doing nothing, or even in doing one thing. He was going to do something different each year.

"The first year he decided to catch up with foreign affairs. He said every American ought to know more nowadays about what is going on in the world, than any of us had ever known before, so he read and talked this subject.

"That led him into the study of Spanish, and he took the second year for that—said we were going to have to take a more active part in the affairs of our own hemisphere. He found there were several groups in our city that spoke Spanish, and he cultivated them. He got a secondhand set of phonograph records to improve his pronunciation and fluency in speaking; he gets along very well now.

"The third year, which we are now in, he took up economic problems, the question of inflation, the activities of co-operatives, and so on. He picked up a small job in connection with the political campaign, that paid him a little money, and he was so well informed on national and international affairs that he made quite a mark for himself.

"Next year he plans to give to music appreciation, and the following year to working up the genealogy and history of our family.

"All this hasn't cost a cent, Dr. Popenoe—at least, virtually nothing. He lives very simply on his retirement pay and small savings. He has been active in the local taxpayers' association and in the work of his church. He's getting more out of life after his so-called retirement than ever before. Anybody else could do what he has done. I hope a lot of them will."

"I hope so, too, Mrs. I. Many thanks."

People who have strong social inclinations sometimes feel frustrated by the lack of social contacts as they grow older. In fact, loneliness has always been recognized as one of the two or three most serious handicaps of later years. But these older people, who can dispose of their own time, have particularly good opportunities to join constructive organizations—unless they are virtually bedridden. "The more we get together, the happier we'll be," says the song; and it's true if the others are the right people. Older persons should be continually on the lookout for suitable organizations to join. It is desirable to get one that has the crusading spirit, and try to give the world, before you leave it, as hard a push as you can in the right direction.

If you can't get around freely, because of physical infirmities, there's the telephone. Mrs. W. is occupying herself with a telephone campaign to get used clothing for European war victims. Mr. R. has lately been occupied in a telephone campaign to help the recall of a mayor and city council who haven't lived up to his expectations. The reform organization which is trying to clean up the city was delighted to furnish him with a list of registered voters, and he's going right down the list.

If you haven't a phone, you can do a lot by mail. Miss L. watches the daily papers for instances in which someone has done a good job, and sends a card of encouragement or congratulations. It may contain only three or four words, but she thinks it might help a preacher in Arkansas or a bus driver in North Dakota to know that someone admires a good deed and is willing to tell him so.

Others go back to school.

"I want to tell you about my husband's father," Mrs. S. writes.

"I have read a number of articles in your column about activities for the elderly. My father-in-law came to live with us after his wife died. He was depressed and lonely, idle and useless to himself, although in fairly good health. My husband and I faced a serious problem in our home.

"We had been planning to take a couple of courses together at the evening high school, which gives free classes of all sorts for adults. We wanted to study the writing of short stories. 'Let's take dad along,' my husband urged, as we looked over the catalog together. 'There are a lot of things here that ought to interest him.' We showed dad the list—everything from flower arrangement to steam engineering. He finally picked out the making of furniture, because he could work on it in our basement between classes, and he had always been handy with his hands. He took to it like a duck to water. We bought a load of blocks and mill ends for a few dollars, and he has been turning out things, first for the family, then for sale. He works when he feels like it—which is more than half the time, is almost self-supporting, and happier than he has been for a generation, I believe. If he can do it, others can, too."

Mrs. G. contributes another suggestion. "It's hard to get an old person started," she admits. "They are inert, resistant, and negative. I have found one of the easiest ways is to ask 'What would you do if you had your life to live over again?' That usually brings out—with a little persistence—some definite idea along with the assertion that 'I'm too old to begin now.' But when you get the idea, you can help grandma to realize it, even in a small way."

Finally, Mr. N. reports that "When an elderly aunt came to live with us, she tried to put on a sort of Pollyanna act: 'The world has treated me well,' she kept repeating. At last I asked, 'What are you doing to repay the world?' She was shocked, but began to think. She really had a lot of energy, and a counselor with whom she talked suggested practical nursing. Inquiry from an employment agency showed there was an active demand. Auntie took a Red Cross course, studied a couple of textbooks, and started out. She gets mainly hopeless cases that need watching, but for whom little else can be done. Their families are pathetically grateful for someone to lighten their load. I hope more of the Senior Citizens

will discover that their usefulness to the world exists as long as they exist."

Old men are a greater problem to the family than are old women.

Mr. T. has reminded me of this. "You have written about the problem of an aged mother," he points out, "but an aged father is a greater problem. He is often not vigorous enough to carry on his former hobbies (mine was gardening), and he does not fit into the home comfortably. An old woman is more likely to enjoy the recreations that can be engaged in during old age, such as knitting, crocheting, or making rugs. She can help in the homemaking tasks. An old man often feels completely stranded."

Mr. T. is quite right, and it is important that more attention be given to old men. Sometimes a little imagination would do the trick. Mr. and Mrs. L. were supporting his father, and also trying to find someone to be in the home when their three sons came home from school each day, since Mr. and Mrs. L. were both obliged to work out. It was hard to find a "mother's helper." Suddenly they had an inspiration: "Let's elect Dad!" They brought him into the home. When the boys return from school he is on hand to welcome them. He takes charge of them on week ends. He and the boys frequently have dinner ready when Mr. and Mrs. L. get home late and tired. The boys have masculine patterns which are much more helpful to them than those that could be provided by a high school girl engaged as "mother's helper."

Such a solution might frequently be found in the country or in a small town, but the city home or apartment often provides no leeway. Other cities should follow the example of Philadelphia, which has established some 40 clubs for older people in various parts of the city and suburbs. These are directed by the Philadelphia Recreation Association which is supported by the Community Chest. Old men and women are developing hobbies there—painting, making clay pottery, and other crafts, for example. They are developing a normal social life on their own account.

Except for supervision, the expense is small. Rooms are provided by churches, synagogues, settlements, or schools. Members contribute a few cents for refreshments. Old people who formerly

sat on park benches or shivered in dreary lodging houses are enjoying through these clubs a well-filled life.

Sometimes plans made for parents, though well laid out, are wrecked by one of the most disastrous failings of elderly people, that is, their inability to delegate authority.

Mr. C. has built up a prosperous business, on which the future security of his family largely depends. His main thought for many years past should have been to entrust the younger men with more and more responsibility, so they could carry on alone successfully, when he goes. Instead, he has consistently refused to let them have any initiative. His business is falling to pieces and may not survive him.

Mrs. F. is head of a welfare organization, which is highly respected in her community. But she can't continue with it forever. Younger women of ability, who have worked with her, have dropped out because they were not allowed to go ahead. She has nothing but chair-warmers and yes-women left. She has failed in her duty to the organization, to the community, and to herself.

But right in the family, fathers and mothers too often make the same mistake.

Father should gradually turn over as much as possible of the routine to his son or sons. They should be taking care of paying the taxes, arranging the insurance, keeping up the garden, and watching the installments. He could devote more time to other things. If anything happened to him, they could keep going. And they would be getting an invaluable education for taking care of their own homes in the future.

Similarly mother should steadily call upon her daughters to assume most of the routine responsibilities of homemaking. She would then have more time to cultivate outside interests, to make her experience and ability felt in community affairs. Instead, she claims credit for "thinking only of them" and being "prepared to sacrifice herself for them." She is making them parasites who will be unfit to manage homes of their own. Moreover, when they are gone she will have nothing to take her time and will be tempted to become a meddlesome mother-in-law; while she will also lack the community contacts and interests which she ought to have.



Forty years ago there was a popular song, "Let the women do the work." It's long since time to let the children do the work—so far as possible—for both men and women! Exploited, commercialized child labor is an ugly and vicious thing; but for every child who is doing too much work there are probably a dozen today who are not doing enough for their own good.

If mothers organized their work in that way, some of them could do a lot of things, besides being mothers. Some of them want to do other things; some of them have to do so, because they need the money. But nobody has made a special effort to help them find suitable work.

Mrs. Naomi G. Siegel of Brooklyn, N. Y., commented on this in *Child Study*. Remarking that there are many jobs which can be more competently filled by an intelligent mother than by the type of person usually employed in them, she suggested that "there should be an employment agency exclusively for mothers." What kind of jobs would it offer?

1. Especially for older mothers, there is always a demand for a "homemaker," going into a home where a mother is temporarily absent or ill and managing children and the home so that it may be kept together. Social work agencies are never able to find enough women for these jobs, which are fairly well paid and require an eight- or nine-hour day.

2. Similarly, Mrs. Siegel points out that "with some training before or on the job, mothers could be a great improvement over much of the personnel found in child-rearing institutions for mental defectives, delinquents, orphans, in children's hospital wards, and in day nurseries."

3. In the field of selling, a mother could be extremely helpful in those departments selling infants' and children's clothing, juvenile furniture, baby carriages, toys, books, records, and household equipment. "I still feel grateful to the motherly person who advised me on the purchase of my baby's layette," she reminisces, "and I recall with some annoyance the ridiculous gifts I used to send to friends on the recommendation of young salesgirls who knew as little as I about children's needs."

4. Not forgetting baby sitters, many mothers would find that the best way of occupying their energies and earning money would

be to board children, thus providing much-needed foster homes. The demand for such homes is really desperate in many large cities.

If a mother is not physically able to get about much, one way in which she could make a real contribution just now is by writing letters to people abroad. The greatest problem that confronts us is world peace. Most of us feel that this depends on vast forces, beside which we are powerless. But if enough individuals take an active part, they will in themselves become one of these "vast forces."

Maybe you know of people abroad to whom you can write. If not, some of your acquaintances can furnish you with names and addresses. Or you can send a little bundle through one of the various relief agencies, and get a letter of thanks from the recipient which will open a correspondence. Draw them out. Try to get their point of view, and give them ours.

Another standard employment of time for the parent who must be in action is the compiling of a family history. Set down all the facts and anecdotes that you know about your ancestors and other members of the family. Try particularly to be accurate in dates and places. This will lead to some correspondence with other old-timers who can supplement your information. We need more family history in the United States. It is one of the things that helps people to be family-minded.

If you are scientifically inclined, you might be interested in making a study of handwriting, to see how much you can tell from it about character and personality. The public library can furnish you with some of the recent books on this.

Even from a bedroom window you can make a study of trees, or clouds, or stars. Any one of those will keep you occupied for a long time, and give you information that you can pass on to others in the family. And you won't find it a very strenuous job—at least not physically.

In conclusion, let me mention four points, through neglect of which older people often make difficulties for themselves:

1. Financial. Retain your independence. Sometimes an aged parent turns his funds over to his offspring with the understanding that they will take care of him as long as he lives. Don't do it! "Devoted children will not demand this action, and the greedy

ones are more to be dreaded than any other type of grafter," as psychiatrist Nolan D. C. Lewis puts it.

2. Personal appearance. One of the common complaints is that old people let themselves get run down, physically offensive or untidy. You're not old enough to incur that danger to any great extent; but watch yourself.

3. Conversation. One of the most notorious evils of the elderly is their tendency to fall into anecdotage; to relate over and over again the details of the battle of San Juan Hill in the Spanish-American war, or whatever it may be. As a corrective, someone has suggested that an elderly person should make it a point never to refer to any event that happened more than 12 months ago. That's worth considering.

4. Self-confidence. One of the greatest dangers is to become depressed over the idea that one hasn't accomplished much in life. Avoid this by getting a new job that will be useful—not the traditional "leaf raking," but a real contribution to the world's work. If you are not dependent on a pay check, you can make yourself extremely useful somewhere, perhaps more than ever before in your life. Finally, your doctor would probably advise you, don't eat too much!

Sometimes age brings wisdom. Sometimes, as Knut Hamsun remarked, it brings nothing but age. Plan for it in advance. When you retire from your regular job, don't ask yourself, "What is the world now prepared to do for me?" Ask yourself, "What am I now prepared to do for the world?"

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